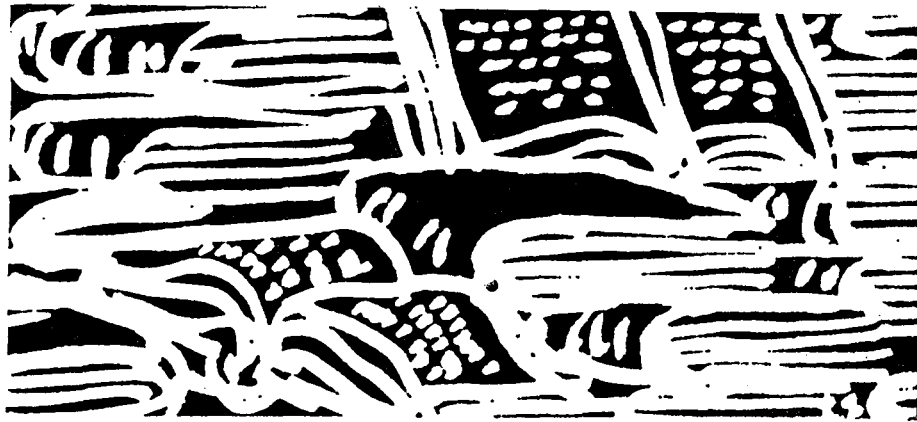


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COMMONWEAL



Fall Book Issue

ANGLO-AMERICAN ATTITUDES

David Lodge

THE REALITY OF REAL PEOPLE

Alan Pryce-Jones

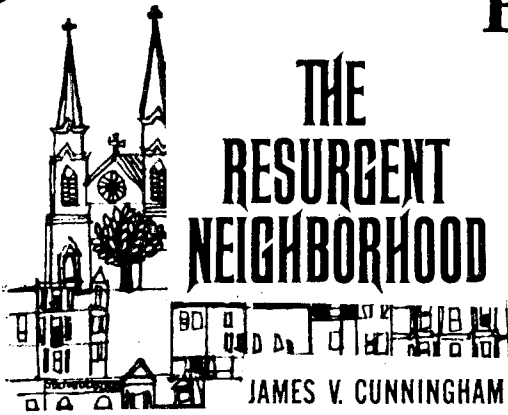
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CORRESPONDENCE



Cameron on Vietnam

Sycamore Mills, Pa.

To the Editors: Re: "Farewell to America" [Sept. 3], the name of the author, J. M. Cameron, does not "ring a bell," although I have been a reasonably faithful reader of *COMMONWEAL* since its inception. Your readers deserve some authority for such statements as, "Outside of a few client regimes that have little choice, and possibly Western Germany, American policy in Vietnam has few admirers and few supporters."

Paul J. V. Murphy, in his articles in recent editions of *Fortune*, reports to the contrary. One may question his accuracy, even his veracity, but *Fortune's* editor at least informs the reader that the writer has been making an extended tour of the countries of the South Pacific and has interviewed the leaders of many Eastern countries. The reader may take it from there.

Another Cameron profundity: "American liberals—not all, of course, but many—are still stupefied by anti-Communism." This is as valuable a contribution as, say, "British intellectuals—not all, of course, but many—are still convinced of the value of the Munich Pact for peace in our time." Neither is worth the ink with which to print it. To answer Mr. Cameron, the American liberal has faced the reality of Communism.

Admitted, Mr. Cameron has prophesied a great (though distant) future for America. May no reader be churlish enough to challenge *that* statement but, on the whole, was such a trivial article worth space in *COMMONWEAL*?

JOSEPH J. WALL

Kashmir-India

To the Editors: In your Editorial, "War in Asia" [*COMMONWEAL*, September 24], I think you have touched the heart of the matter. Anyone with some insight into the complexities of the Kashmir problem, when placed against the backdrop of the conditions existing

in India, would suspect that the legal arguments on which the Government of India leans so heavily are not the actual reasons for its reluctance to hold a plebiscite. Unfortunately, almost all the newspapers in this country have been separating the problem from its historical context and calling into question India's allegiance to the principle of self-determination.

The need for a plebiscite in Kashmir does not arise from the principle of self-determination. If it does, then, as you have mentioned in your editorial, each of the other religious groups in India (and for that matter, in other countries as well) has a right to decide whether it wants to form a separate nation. Hence, it is not as a matter of principle, but because of a historical accident, namely the partition of British India and the particular course of subsequent history that the question of a plebiscite comes about.

Certainly the Government of India has to start contemplating some concessions in the interest of world peace, if not for any other reason. However it must also take into account the possible domestic repercussions of any move it may make towards a settlement. For it is certainly not going to help world peace if India blows herself up in the process of trying to solve the Kashmir dilemma. It seems to me that the U. N. mediators will have to recognize and have a sympathetic understanding of this predicament in order to make any progress in bringing about lasting peace to the Indian subcontinent.

DENNIS CHAKKALAKAL

"After the Council"

Durham, N.H.

To the Editors: "And after the Council?" [Hans Küng, Sept. 3] is a question many have been asking, especially since the death of John XXIII and the reign of Pope Paul. Hans Küng's controlled optimism—perhaps "controlled hopefulness" is a more exact phrase—was appropriate and justifiable.

At least the foundation of Professor Küng's optimism was more or less strengthened when Pope Paul an-

nounced the formation of the Episcopal Council at the opening of this latest (and most probably last) session. However, it remains to be seen how many of Küng's other five points will be met squarely. His proposal for "a serious reform of the Curia" will receive strong and understandable opposition from obvious sources.

Pope Paul's recent comments, moreover, were no cause for great enthusiasm. The other four points may very well prove to be the real test of the liberal Bishops' strength and conviction; for they are among the most controversial questions yet to be raised at this Council. The implications of their controversial nature may intimidate many Bishops.

However, even if all five points should be resolved according to Professor Küng's specifications, a few other considerations may cause us to question the real and final success of Vatican II.

For example, although the Council has debated the questions of a theology of the laity and the nature of the Church, it has not approached the concomitant practical problem of this laity and Church as they are experienced in suburbia. More specifically, many Bishops have voiced a legitimate concern for the poor; but no one seems to be thinking of the non-poor. The spiritual problems of the comfortable middle class, for instance, are just as real as those of people who are starving or who are on relief. At times one is tempted to recognize a vague Puritanism which seemingly equates a people's standard of living with its measure of salvation.

Even more important, it doesn't seem as if the Council will make a clear and unequivocal statement condemning nuclear war and nuclear armament. And yet, our nuclear way of life and possible nuclear way of death are questions far more significant, finally, than even birth control. At least some of those birth control pills can be used to regulate the menstrual cycle in order to help some women bear children. There is little to be said about the positive and/or constructive good of nuclear

weapons.

Admittedly, many observers such as Küng have enthusiastically praised the Council for avoiding new condemnations. Nevertheless, the Pope's many appeals for peace and even his personal appearance at the United Nations will be of little more than perfunctory value if the Council as a Christian voice does not provide men with the foundations of real peace, if the Bishops do not make a human, spiritual, and moral bid for the survival of men and history.

"You can't expect the Bishops to do everything," someone may rightfully object. Nevertheless, if the Council avoids, disregards, or doesn't significantly take into account some of the above questions, especially those concerning violence and war, then perhaps, in time, Vatican II may be accused of an inadequacy not unlike that which Hochhuth recognized in Pius XII: confronted by the major moral problems of the moment, Christian Bishops in Council remained mute. A. POULIN, JR.

Correction

Chicago, Ill.

To the Editors: To clarify some confusion concerning the phrase, "*armes à fin de discussion*," which appears in my article "The Time Is Now" [September 24], it should be noted that the original text reads "*armes à fin de dissuasion*." The first version might translate "we arm to parley"; the second simply translates "deterrent weapons."

JUSTUS GEORGE LAWLER

Excise Taxes

New York, N. Y.

To the Editors: The reduction in excise taxes recently achieved by the Administration appears deficient in two respects: the general level of demand may not increase to the extent a number of its economist-proponents may think and the rich will benefit more than the poor.

The basic rationale behind the cuts is that it will stimulate the economy in much the same manner as last year's

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BOMBING, NORTH AND SOUTH

Newsweek has printed a picture of a dud U.S. bomb—probably a 750-pounder—sitting in the front yard of a North Vietnam home. The photo is a Soviet one, and could have been posed for maximum propaganda effect. Yet there is little need for embellishing the evidence. Our bombs have been raining down on civilian settlements in North Vietnam for some time, and without much outcry from the American public. Chris Koch of radio station WBAI reports that his tour of North Vietnam's Thanh Hoa province showed many towns partially destroyed. In Nam Dinh, the north's third largest city, he saw a bombed pagoda, a partially destroyed hospital, and a workers' settlement that had been reduced to rubble. American bombers had also destroyed a thirty-building hospital complex which, he was told, had been a research and treatment center for tuberculosis. Forty doctors and patients were killed.

Koch also reports that an agricultural co-op, far from any industrial target, had been hit by four raids during July, destroying or damaging 329 homes and killing 35 peasants, fifteen of them small children. Perhaps Koch has been shown only the horrible examples. Then again, perhaps not. If there is any selectivity of evidence here, it apparently works both ways. *Life* magazine used two pages of Koch's North Vietnam photos, but none of civilian targets. Officially—and *Life* is interested in nothing so much as the official—civilian targets are not being hit in the north.

The situation in the south is even more interesting. Our "no sanctuary" policy means that air support can be called on instantly to destroy any village or hamlet from which sniper fire is reported, or which is suspected of harboring Vietcong troops. There is no need to rehearse here the difficulty of weeding out Vietcong guerrillas from the general populace, but

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we should realize that a blurred situation has evoked a very blurred U.S. policy. In the absence of constant, vigilant criticism at home, the "no sanctuary" policy could easily come to look like ordinary terror tactics, penalizing or destroying an entire village as a lesson for those who fail to report resident guerrillas.

The "open target" policy requires even more careful supervision over military enthusiasm. Already we have had a series of reports of small hamlets being destroyed within an "open target area" where American and South Vietnamese pilots unable to dispose of bombs over their designated targets are invited to drop explosives at will. The American military, it is true, has announced some fresh limitations on the "open target" policy, but their effect has yet to be measured. The whole idea of massive bombing, often by jets that fly too fast to see what they are hitting, raises the question of what there will be left to save after our saving action.

Bernard Fall, writing in the *New Republic*, reports that the Air Force flew three raids into the Mekong Delta, followed by several raids along the Central Vietnam shore. With the exception of one district, the delta has an average population density of 250 people per square mile, with one belt of districts reaching the density of one thousand people per square mile. Fall writes: "With an average bomb load of 500 tons per thirty-plane raid and a known bomb dispersion pattern of about 2,000 yards by 1,000 yards for such a raid, the effects of such a bombardment can be readily guessed."

The point of Fall's article is that people have become irrelevant in this war. As the U.S. forces reduce a perplexing hit-and-run struggle into the kind of slugging match it can understand—and win—perhaps a bit more attention could be given to the nature of that "win."

COUP IN JAKARTA

Just enough of the participants are still around, and just enough of them dead, to suggest that the truth about the attempted September 30 coup in Jakarta will not be easy to come by. Were the Communists really foolhardy enough to risk their solid position in a doubtful adventure? Did the army, worried over President Sukarno's hints about arming the peasants, have a coup of its own in the offing, which the Communists tried to forestall by shooting first? Was it all a play for personal power? Or the result of ideological impatience within the "hard" wing of the Indonesian Communist party? Unfortunately, as the smoke clears in Jakarta, we are most likely to see—more smoke.

Smoke, however, is not at all a bad symbol for Indo-

nesia, a land whose sharp internal divisions have often been successfully covered only by clouds of Sukarnoese, that special brand of rhetoric which does not hesitate to declare itself simultaneously in favor of "all that is positive" in the doctrines of Jesus, Marx, and Hitler. To keep his nation unified, President Sukarno, truly one of the organizational geniuses of the "third world," has regularly used the principles of "guided democracy" as a smokescreen to prevent Indonesia's right hand from knowing what its left was doing, and vice versa.

That right hand has usually been the Indonesian army, and the left one the Communist party. The balance between them had been shifting in favor of the latter—till September 30. Now it seems the Army is on top, with Sukarno still balancing in the middle.

The army has some good credentials. Indonesia is one of those nations like Algeria and Burma, where the army arose from the revolutionary struggle; and General Nasution, Indonesia's Defense Minister, has even joined the Mao-Guevara-Giap club with *his* book on guerrilla warfare. But the military is still a privileged elite which can gain mass support only by alliance with the nationalist and Moslem parties, none of which are as well-organized as the Communists.

Indonesia, then, has more options today than it did a few weeks ago—but perhaps not as many as the sanguine might think. There is little chance of Sukarno's belligerent foreign policy being put to rest, wasteful though it is. (Sixty percent of the national budget goes to military expenses at the same time as an insufficient food supply requires the distribution of imported rice.) The military will hardly abandon what is its own claim to importance; and foreign adventures remain useful to unite the nation and distract attention from domestic divisions and grievances. Furthermore, Indonesia's ties with Red China are not strictly an ideological matter, as symbolized by the fact that the official Indonesian representative to the recent Chinese anniversary celebrations was a well-known anti-Communist. The Indonesian Communist party has been involved in takeover attempts before, notably in 1948; nonetheless, it survived. What will be its position when Sukarno, 64 years old and a cardiac patient, is no longer on the scene?

Banning the Communist party, should the army accomplish this, is no long-term solution. Nor can the U.S. do much but keep quiet and avoid burdening those whose goals it favors with the appearance of being "lackeys of America." What Indonesia needs is more, not less, genuine political life, so that viable alternatives to either Communism or Sukarnoese can develop. Once again, it is the difficult problem of the transition from the politics of revolution to the politics of development.

SHOW-DOWN IN A NUNNERY

In his article in this issue, Alan Pryce-Jones remarks that "the heroes and heroines of the daily world are very much stranger than the imaginary constructions of fiction." About the same time we first read those words we also read an account of the defection from the Church of a nun. Was this nun a member of the "new breed," unhappy with the progress of renewal in the Church? Or a theologian who had staked her loyalty on a papal acceptance of "transignification"? Or a radical feminist who wanted the habit of her order changed and the right to be ordained a priest?

She was none of these things. In fact, by our informal sociological indices, she would be the least likely candidate for schism. She is old (75), a convert (from Anglicanism), a religious superior of a small religious community, and totally lacking in credits as an author of *aggiornamento* literature. Only the boldest fiction writer would cast such a nun in the role of intransigent defier of the full weight of episcopal and ecclesiastical authority. But that is what happened.

We are, of course, referring to Mother Cecilia Mary, the head of a small community in Victoria, B.C., which runs an animal shelter. She recently announced that she and her community have left the Church and joined the Old Catholic Church, protesting what she called "Vatican interference." Some time before, the issue had been joined in a dramatic fashion (as animal-shelter confrontations go). She was ordered by her local bishop, and then by the Apostolic Delegate to Canada, to give up her shelter. This she refused to do and two American Benedictines were brought in to run the community. The pressures brought to bear on her continued to mount. They included the cessation of a weekly clothing and food allowance for the community and the discontinuance of a twice-weekly visit by a priest to hear confessions and to bring the sacraments to sick or elderly nuns.

Just why the local authorities chose to deploy their big guns, both monetary and spiritual, is not clear. The Chancellor of the Diocese explained that "they're hurting themselves, and we want to help them fulfill their vocation." Maybe they were hurting themselves and maybe it is difficult for any group of nuns, however small, to fulfill their vocation by caring for animals. But this hardly seems self-evident.

Well, this isn't the first time that silly battles have taken place in the Church and probably won't be the last. The Church will survive and so too, we guess, will the diocese of Victoria. Just how the Old Catholic Church will fare with its new adherents we can't guess;

but they had best be informed that Mother Cecilia is a woman with a will, strongly armored against all the firepower Church authorities can throw her way. As for us, we're going to resist all temptations to run editorials against "arrogant laymen," "pseudo-intellectuals," "Commonweal Catholics," and will instead direct our aim at the real troublemakers: elderly nuns.

RHODESIA

The day may be close when Africa is plunged into another political crisis of the scope of the Congo horror. Prime Minister Ian D. Smith of Rhodesia has been in London the past two weeks seeking alternately to bully and coax concessions from the Labor government on the matter of independence for his country of 220,000 whites and four million Africans. Mr. Smith wants independence on a basis that will insure white rule while the African leadership, speaking from "restriction camps," demands that Africans be enfranchised and that Rhodesia be governed by majority rule, in other words, by a black government.

Fortunately, both the Labor and Tory parties are united in meeting Ian Smith's threat of a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) with assurances of the severest economic and diplomatic sanctions. More important, British leaders are united in insisting that the basis of any independence be agreeable to the majority of Rhodesians. Basic minimums are constitutional guarantees of eventual majority rule and some immediate improvement of the political status of Africans.

The utter paucity of the whites' position is demonstrated by their inability to meet even these terms. It seems the probable nature of Mr. Smith's London mission is to sound out the degree of pressure Britain is willing to apply in case of rebellion. Real grounds for accommodation, at this juncture, simply are not visible.

In the event of UDI, left-wing Labor party members are urging military intervention. Britain took similar action recently in Aden, where it landed troops and suspended the constitution. It is argued that Britain has a double standard in such matters, one for whites and one for non-whites. This is probably true, but it does not convince as to the rightness of intervention in any specific case.

However, there are other factors that will force Prime Minister Wilson to make painful decisions on the question of military intervention against Rhodesia. The pressure of sanctions may well tempt the Rhodesian white government to strike in retaliation at Zambia, whose important Copperbelt mines it could close down

within a few months by cutting off power and coal. This would be a hurting blow against Britain's economy.

The rest of the African nations would not be standing by. The power of nationalism is nowhere stronger than where it has an outside cause, and Rhodesia offers a cause par excellence. And so does South Africa.

Mr. Wilson will be hard pressed to avoid immoderation, on the one hand, and a disastrous compromise settlement on the other. A recent article in these pages by Peter Ritner discussed the unsatisfactory alternatives of the South African question, especially that of military

intervention. No doubt Rhodesia will prove just as sticky.

First chance at the unlucky task goes, of course, to Britain, to whom we should give our strongest support. However, if she fails, as it seems probable she will, the United States should be quick at the U.N. Security Council table to insure that the situation does not degenerate into the political nightmare of the Congo. Things are too undeveloped yet to say what course the U.S. should follow. One can only pray that lessons have been learned from previous experience.



PLEA FOR PEACE

THE POPE IN NEW YORK

When Pope and President appeared together briefly outside the Waldorf, the crowd cheered the Pope. This is one measure of the legacy of John XXIII: the Pope of Rome is now the only man alive capable of upstaging Lyndon Johnson.

What this and the rest of the visit indicated in a change of attitudes toward the papacy was altogether too obvious to engage the attention of those sifting the day's events for "significance." But the evidence was all there: eager reception by the nation's major religious leaders, crowds that totalled more than four million, 15 hours of non-stop Catholicism on TV networks, whose devotion to religion is customarily expressed only on Sunday morning between 8 and 9 o'clock. The *Herald Tribune*, the only respectable New York paper then publishing and the one which a century ago gleefully predicted the collapse of the papacy any year now, found itself unable to restrain enthusiasm; papal symbols sprouted on virtually every page. Several commentators cautiously suggested that a decade ago no Pope could have even set foot in America; one added: "at least not without an army at his back."

If the cheering was unanimous—only one Lutheran editor and one Hungarian newspaper were quoted in opposition—it was not clear as to exactly what was being cheered. In the recent Democratic mayoral primary in New York, after Mayor Wagner's chosen successor Paul Screvane was badly beaten, Screvane turned to Wagner and asked, "Who lost this, you or me?" Many thought that Pope Paul might mentally ask his predecessor, "Who won this, you or me?"

The question is not an idle one, and yet Pope Paul put his personal stamp on this visit as he has on few other events of his reign. Paul's attention to detail and

use of the symbolic is surely superior to John's. What John did spontaneously Paul does carefully, and in this case the minutest gestures and details were subordinated to Paul's chosen message of humility and service.

The inevitable call from the Curia and the New York chancery for trappings that would underline the Pope's importance was overridden. A Negro American bishop was announced on the eve of the trip. After the arrival at Kennedy airport, instead of waiting ten decorous minutes before holding court onboard for U Thant, the Pope immediately appeared in the doorway and strode down to pump Thant's hand vigorously. Despite some ecclesiastical and civic flutterings, the Pope insisted on visiting Harlem. In his meeting with the President, he made a particular point of thanking Johnson for his accomplishments in civil rights. At the U.N., he unostentatiously presented a \$150,000 jeweled crucifix and ring for the poor, bypassing Cardinal Spellman this time and presenting it directly to U Thant for the U.N. Freedom from Hunger fund. At the U.N. reception, he seemed notably warm and animated, especially with the representatives of African nations. Throughout the day he did his best to discourage ring-kissing, though most people, particularly the women, were not to be deterred. The Pope's decision not to stay overnight, which had the incidental effect of enormously amplifying TV coverage, was a way of saying he was visiting the U.N. and not the U.S. This gesture creaked under the weight of hoopla heaped on by the New York chancery but the Pope neatly tied in his brief remarks at each stop with the U.N. visit and neutralized some of the excess. The U.N., however, was unofficially peeved at what appeared to be a chancery takeover of a U.N. visit.

The motorcade, by New York standards, was brisk indeed. A tight schedule and the nervousness of security officers sent it through the city at blurring speed. In Harlem, where the crowd was thinnest, but still six or seven people deep, the police stepped it up to 40 miles per hour, thus expressing more of what New York's finest thinks of Harlem than what the Pope cared to express. One inadvertent papal gift here was the clean streets; it is always an event when the City Sanitation Department decides to service Harlem, and from now on, a papal motorcade will be welcome there *anytime*.

At St. Patrick's Cathedral, the Pope was solemn and direct, expressing the need to work for peace, as he did in the eight other talks he gave during the day. The cathedral rocked with applause—for the first time in its history—and with an occasional “*Viva il Papa*” by seminarians demonstrating they had studied in Rome. Rockefeller, Wagner and half of the Kennedys were on hand, as they were all day. Bobby and Teddy drew squeals from the crowd outside and worked their way through briefly in the Richard Nixon manner, shaking one man's hand while smiling at the next.

Outside the U.N. were five pickets from C.U.R.E. in Los Angeles, demanding the ouster of Cardinal McIntyre. Also a few pro-McIntyre pickets and some Zionists who considered Paul partly responsible for the death of six million Jews. None were allowed within four blocks of the Pope.

The speech at the U.N. was enthusiastically received. It stressed—with some rhetorical force—the Johannine themes of humility, service to the world and man's ability to get out of the mess he got himself into. The Church, the Pope said in effect, is neither in politics nor judging them from above, but is in the service of those whose properly secular job it is to gain the peace. All this went down very well with the delegates, less well perhaps than it did with some in the papal entourage. There was also the Pope's “solemn moral ratification of this lofty institution”—the strongest and most explicit papal statement in support of the U.N., pending, of course, analysis by *National Review*.

A few demurrers, not serious, were heard on the Pope's careful distinction between offensive and defensive weapons, since no nation thinks it has any of the former anyway. Also the Pope's insistence that world order must be founded on a belief in God is a step away from his mentor, Maritain, as well as from Pope John. But the one remark which jolted the audience, was, of course, the reference to artificial birth control as irrational. The question most often raised was why the Pope chose to discuss an issue still up for study in the Church, and some concluded that the Pope was taking

the opportunity to close the debate. Because of the nature of the occasion, no howl went up from the press or civil leaders. United Press labored to explain it away by telling readers the Pope was talking about *artificial* birth control, while the possibility still existed that the pill will be recognized as *natural*.

Gromyko, after a brief pause, applauded the speech loudly and was cordially received by the Pope afterwards. Tass and Pravda were enthusiastic about the speech; instead of diatribes from China, there was merely silence. The Chinese, who have not yet informed readers of the death of Pius XII, may be studying the possibilities here. One line in the papal speech called, in a circumspect way, for the eventual admission of Red China to the U.N. In an interview with Barrett McGurn, the Pope was asked if he would go to China if invited, and the reply was yes.

The Mass at Yankee stadium, which gave many Catholics in the New York area their first look at the modernized liturgy, was fascinating and moving, marred only by the chancery's intrusion of a cornerstone blessing for a new seminary in Yonkers. The chancery proved during the day its expertness at organizing and logistics, and also its positive gift for the jarring and the provincial.

Those Seven Points

Television coverage was massive. The public was denied no detail. CBS rushed in early with a bulletin from Irving R. Levine reporting that the Pope had breakfasted on a sweet roll and coffee, light. Similar attention was given to midday refreshment (orange juice at the chancery) and supper on the way home (veal scallopini and a banana). The high points were professionally covered by 80 TV cameras and more than a thousand reporters. Father Peter O'Donnell, the Paulist who served as house Catholic for NBC was extremely effective; over at CBS, Bishop Sheen fared less well. When asked why the Pope was flying back on TWA, he observed that the initials stood for Travelling With the Angels. Compared with the sensible, even commentary of CBS's regular team, the Bishop always seemed to be breaking into set routines. (Eric Severeid: “What did you think of the points in the Pope's speech?” Bishop Sheen: “The Holy Father made seven points, like the seven notes of the octave . . .”) One is left with the impression that while the Pope may be invited back, Bishop Sheen will not be.

One thing that caught New York by surprise was the Pope's warmth. Midway through the day he exchanged Roman *gravitas* for a broad grin and the upraised hands

The results of the visit can not now be discerned through the euphoria. Certainly he has given the U.N. a helpful boost at a crucial time. Massive TV coverage

NATIONAL AFFAIRS

mately the same low levels as prevail in neighboring and notoriously backward Virginia and Maryland. The ostensible purpose is to check the further flight of the white middle class to the suburbs although the majority of whites in this income bracket have already departed. The effect of this tight-budget, low-tax policy is to starve the city's schools and essential social services. The deprivation falls most heavily upon the low-income Negroes who, under the present system of local government, have no way to redress the balance.

Many Northern congressmen who are liberal on national issues are covertly opposed to home rule for Washington. They find District businessmen a convenient source of additional campaign contributions. They enjoy exploiting the District Government in many large and small ways, ranging from fixing parking tickets to finding patronage jobs for friends. The extent of this quiet opposition to home rule became apparent when the discharge petition finally forced a floor vote and some 40 Northern Democrats opposed the Administration bill.

A Substitute

When it became clear that the President was going to be successful in rounding up 218 signatures, the District Committee suddenly voted out a substitute home rule bill of its own. This measure, sponsored by Representative B. F. Sisk, a Democrat from Fresno, California, provided for two referendum elections. In the first, the residents of the District were to vote on whether they wanted home rule and in the same balloting choose a 15-member commission to draw up a charter of local government. Assuming the first vote was favorable to home rule, the bill directed this charter commission to submit its work to the voters in a second referendum. If the charter were approved, it would go into effect unless either house of Congress killed it within 90 days. The strategy behind this timetable assumed that the charter would not be ready and the two elections would not have been held before the current Congress adjourned. Under the circumstances, the decision would go over to the next Congress to be elected in November, 1966, which would presumably be more conservative than the one elected last year in the anti-Goldwater landslide. When the showdown came in the House on September 29, an unusual coalition of Republicans, Southerners, and dissident Northern Democrats replaced the Administration bill with the Sisk substitute. The vote was 227 to 174. Twenty-three liberal Republicans joined 151 Democrats in supporting immediate home rule.

Two minor factors contributed to the defeat. The original Administration bill had a provision, subsequently deleted in hopes of winning broader support, that established an automatic formula for an annual federal payment in lieu of taxes on the federal monuments and buildings in the city. These occupy nearly one-half of the land in the city and the federal payment currently represents 12 percent of the city's budget. Under the present system, this payment, like the rest of the city's budget, is authorized each year by the two District Committees and then the money actually appropriated by the two Appropriations Subcommittees, with the result that the municipal government is in doubt every year as to how much money it will have available. The proposal for calculating this formula automatically in the future would have enabled Congress to free itself completely of this tiresome, housekeeping responsibility.

But it raised the hackles of a few members of the Appropriations Committee such as Representative Michael Kirwan of Youngstown, Ohio, who did not want their committee's enormous powers curtailed in any respect. A few members from the Far West opposed the bill on the grounds that they could not approve a federal payment to the District when no comparable payment is made to their states for the vast tracts of public lands, forests, and parks owned by the Federal Government. Both these grounds for opposition seem almost frivolous in their picayune, narrow-minded quality but they helped swell the size of the defeat.

The adoption of the Sisk substitute left the home rule advocates in a quandary. There seemed no way to reconcile it with the Administration bill passed by the Senate. Even the convening of a formal House-Senate conference was dangerous because the House conferees would be drawn from the hostile ranks of the District Committee. As this is written, sentiment is developing in the Senate to accept the Sisk substitute and get its complicated machinery into motion. There would be nothing to prevent the charter commission from drawing up the same plan of government as proposed by the Administration — a strong mayor and an elected council and school board. If action were hurried along, a final vote in Congress could be reached before adjournment next summer, contrary to the calculations of the opponents. On a straightforward vote, with no substitutes or amendments permitted, those Northern Democrats whose vote made the difference would be reluctant to cast a clearcut vote against home rule. This would be particularly true if national civil rights organizations focused attention on the issue as they did last month.

WILLIAM V. SHANNON

ANGLO-AMERICAN ATTITUDES



Decorum in British and American fiction

DAVID LODGE

I cannot recall who described Britain and America as two nations divided by a common language, but the epigram indicates very concisely why the literatures of these two countries afford a uniquely rewarding opportunity for comparative study. The current orthodoxy on the differences between English and American fiction may be found in such books as Richard Chase's *The American Novel and Its Tradition*. According to Chase, the English novel is "notable for its great practical sanity, its powerful engrossing composition of wide ranges of experience into a moral centrality and equality of judgment." It is, characteristically, realistic in its depiction of life, "middlebrow" in intellectual temper and, naturally enough in view of the society out of which it grew, preoccupied with "manners."

The American fictional imagination, on the other hand, "has been stirred . . . by the aesthetic possibilities of radical forms of alienation, contradiction and disorder." It has assimilated, precariously, to the novel form the conventions of romance, and manifests "an assumed freedom from the ordinary novelistic requirements of verisimilitude, development and continuity; a tendency towards melodrama and idyl; a more or less formal abstractness and, on the other hand, a tendency to plunge into the underside of consciousness; a willingness to abandon moral questions or to ignore the spectacle of man in society, or to consider these things

only indirectly or abstractly." In brief, the American novel, though lacking the solidity, poise and completeness of the English novel, is more daring, and goes deeper into the human condition.

Another way of distinguishing between English and American fiction, which runs sometimes alongside, sometimes athwart Chase's scheme, is by reference to language and I propose to devote my remarks to this side of the question. I believe it is widely recognized that in fiction, as in poetry, America offers more achievement and excitement today than England. And certainly one reason for this is that American writers seem to be trying to do more with their medium, which is language.

Linguistic interpretations of the American literary tradition are customarily centered on the idea of the American vernacular as a source of literary vitality. Whereas Chase's tradition begins with James Fenimore Cooper's stilted, but mythically suggestive tales of the wilderness, in the vernacular scheme the American novel comes of age with Mark Twain (notorious critic of Cooper), who in *Huck Finn* found a voice, non-literary yet articulate — even poetic, tough yet tender, humorous yet troubled, a voice which expressed the American experience. Ernest Hemingway formulated this reading of American fiction (in which he himself occupies a key position) when he said "all modern American literature comes from one book by Mark Twain called *Huckleberry Finn*."

Unfortunately the American vernacular has served, on occasion, as the rallying cry for a certain literary

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nationalism or isolationism. That is, from time to time American writers who eschewed the vernacular — like Henry James — are brought before the bar of a kind of literary Un-American Activities Committee and found guilty of treason. Such criticism is a legacy of the revolt against the Genteel Tradition at the turn of the century, and obscures the real significance of the vernacular. As Mark Twain first employed it, the vernacular is a vital element in American fiction. But it is not in itself enough to define the American fictional achievement; and its influence has been more than American.

Consider these three passages:

1. You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, but that ain't no matter. That book was made by Mr. Mark Twain and he told the truth, mainly.
2. If you really want to know about it, the first thing you'll probably want to know is where I was born, and what my lousy childhood was like, and how my parents were occupied and all before they had me, and all that David Copperfield kind of crap, but I don't feel like going into it, if you want to know the truth.
3. As soon as I got to Borstal they made me a long-distance cross-country runner. I suppose they thought I was just the build for it because I was long and skinny for my age (and still am) and in any case I didn't mind it too much, to tell you the truth, because running had always been made much of in my family, especially running away from the police.

The first two quotations are, of course, the opening lines of *Huckleberry Finn* (1885) and *The Catcher in the Rye* (1951). The connections between them are obvious, and have been frequently pointed out. But the connections between them and the third quotation, which is the opening of *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* (1959) by the young British writer Alan Sillitoe, are equally obvious. Allowing for the differences of speech determined by period and locale, all three passages adopt the same tone, establishing a direct, informal, conversational relationship between the narrator and the reader ("you"). All three exploit loose or "incorrect" grammar to subtle rhetorical effect, characteristically by adding to the end of a statement an unexpected qualification (Huck's "mainly," Holden's "but I don't feel like going into it," the runner's "especially running away from the police") that disconcerts yet delights us by its candor. All three, interestingly, invoke "truth" with deceptive casualness. In the face of adult incomprehension and adult evil, these youthful heroes are inventive and resourceful liars — but not to

the reader: they are passionately concerned to find — and state — the truth. For this purpose the vernacular monologue is an ideal narrative method.

But the method has obvious limitations. The use of the first person necessarily excludes more than one perspective on events, while the use of the vernacular severely restricts the vocabulary and hence the expressive possibilities open to the writer. The above-mentioned writers get round this by using situational irony and the comments of other characters to evaluate their heroes, and by discreetly heightening the vernacular speech on occasion; but their freedom for maneuver of this kind is limited, and all successful attempts in this genre have the quality of a *tour de force*. Certain kinds of novelistic undertaking require either richer linguistic resources than those afforded by the vernacular, or a wider perspective than that afforded by the first person, or both.

The Indecorous Americans

What I have been discussing is, in literary parlance, "decorum": that is, the adjustment of style to subject, to the narrator and to the latter's assumed relationship to his audience. The interesting thing about American literature is that the vernacular monologue is virtually the only literary form in which decorum in this traditional sense is preserved. As soon as he leaves this mode, the American writer seems to be in a void of literary conventions, obliged to make up his own rules as he goes along. This may be observed by comparing Melville or Hawthorne with any major English novelist of the nineteenth century — Jane Austen, or Dickens, or George Eliot. The English novelists create and sustain their own distinctive authorial voices which give unity of form and feeling to their versions of experience, and persuade the reader to accept their validity. It may be an anonymous voice, but it is strongly charged with personality: urbane or energetic, jolly or meditative. It is always civilized and reliable. The reader knows where he is.

It is quite otherwise with the American writers. Melville threshes about in the literary conventions as wildly as his own white whale. The identifiable, if mysterious narrator who begins the story of *Moby Dick* fades gradually from view, and his function is taken over by an impersonal and omniscient narrator. The jocular, yarn-spinning style of the early chapters shifts into passages of prophetic declamation, Shakespearean pastiche, poetic lyricism, and discursive prose. Narrative alternates with dramatic dialogue, soliloquy and learned digression.

Hawthorne, though concerned, as Melville seems not to be, to cultivate an even and harmonious narrative tone, is scarcely less disconcerting. What he gives with one hand he seems to take away with the other. The supernatural is qualified by the skeptical, the symbolic by the literal. He keeps an anxious, wary eye on the reader. He takes a long time to warm up, but is given to effects of startling compression. His style is so highly polished it is almost painful. We can never relax in his presence.

One might speculate that literary decorum is not unconnected with social decorum in the ordinary sense of the word, and that the ease with which the English novelists find and sustain an appropriate tone owes something to the existence in England of a subtle and complex code of manners, understood and accepted by all, for which America has no equivalent. Similarly, American writing in the vernacular style may be interpreted as a rejection of attempts to import an alien code of manners into America. Its use of "low" and vulgar language, while preserving *literary* decorum, commonly draws protests from sections of the community committed to upholding conservative European standards of social decorum.

The American writer, then, is outside the vernacular monologue, fundamentally unsure about how to address himself to his subject and to his audience. As a result, he tends to fuse and combine modes of discourse — the prosaic, the lyrical, the satiric, the sentimental, the colloquial, the archaic, and the discursive — which in European literature are kept in separate compartments. To state it most simply: the American writer puts words together which, according to the canons of traditional literary decorum, just don't belong together. This can be most conveniently illustrated from poetry: "Who goes there? Hankering, gross, mystical, nude?/How is it I extract strength from the beef I eat?"

One cannot imagine any English poet of the nineteenth century, including Hopkins, arranging that disturbing collocation of adjectives at the end of the first line, or springing that disconcerting question, an inch away from bathos, in the second. Whitman's lines have a distinctly modern ring; and when we consider that the modern poetic revolution in the English language was led by two Americans — T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound — we may appreciate that the American writer's relative freedom from traditional canons of literary decorum brings with it tremendous advantages as well as disadvantages, particularly when it comes to the treatment of twentieth-century experience. This has been as true in fiction as in poetry.

If we apply Chase's descriptive distinction to twen-

tieth-century fiction, we find it fits the American novel well enough, but the English novel not so well. The "powerful engrossing composition of wide ranges of experience into a normal centrality and equability of judgment" is essentially a characteristic of the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novel, and its performance depended upon a way of life which, while fluid enough to be interesting, was also stable enough for the novelist to assume that he held in common with his audience essentially the same views on morals, metaphysics and society. Hence the ease with which the Victorian novelist sustained a tone that mingled a relaxed familiarity with a wise omniscience. He addressed himself to "the common reader," confident that such a person existed.



The twentieth century affords no such conditions, nor such confidence. The common reader, who never existed in America, is now, in England, only a ghost haunting book jackets. The modern novelist is conscious not of community, but of isolation, if not alienation. The experience he contemplates is fragmentary, disordered, subversive of the old certainties. This situation calls for a new kind of literary decorum, a decorum of indecorum, a bursting of the molds of obsolete conventions, that yet avoids dissipating its energy in a welter of disconnected and contradictory effects.

The modern novelists may be judged by the success with which they have confronted this challenge. To me, the supreme example of success is Joyce's *Ulysses*, where language plays magically over the commonplace so as to stretch its significance to infinite dimensions, without, however, violating its value as the commonplace. Among other major novelists, Conrad projected his vision of the times in tales of adventure and melodrama overlaid with brooding philosophic skepticism and rich symbolic pattern; Virginia Woolf made the impossibility of communication her subject; D. H. Lawrence mingled the realistic and the visionary with a grand disdain for novelistic convention. Almost alone, E. M. Forster managed, precariously, to adapt

the authorial manner of the nineteenth century to the matter of the twentieth. The novelists, like Galsworthy and Bennett, who went on writing as if nothing had happened, have not survived.

I am talking about the period of the "experimental" novel. But in America the novel had always been experimental, always groping, in profound uncertainty about its status and its audience, for new forms of expression with which to articulate baffling experience. Hence the language of modern American fiction — Hemingway's cunning manipulation of the simplest syntax and diction, Fitzgerald's lyricism so daringly expended upon the trivial and evanescent, Faulkner's torrential rhetoric, flecked with colloquialism—constituted less of a break with "tradition" than equivalent experiments in Europe—may indeed have been made possible by the absence of such a tradition.

The modern movement in literature seems to have lost much of its impetus. We are no longer living among giants. The contrast, however, is more striking in England than in America. In England we seem to be slipping back into old exhausted decorums, reverting to a Victorian technique based on a shallow or cynical assumption that class, material success and sexual behavior still adequately contain the realities of existence. Style is all too well adjusted to this superficial view: English life being, on the surface, rather flat, dull and stuffy, we are producing a lot of novels written in flat, dull and stuffy prose. Leaving aside Graham Greene and Evelyn Waugh, who belong to an intermediate period I have not had space to touch on, the most interesting novelists we have are William Golding, who obtains poetic license by only obliquely treating contemporary life, and Kingsley Amis, who makes comic capital out of the impoverishment of the contemporary English imagination. Otherwise only vernacular monologues, based on American models, relieve the monotony.

In America, however, it is still possible to sense that Joyce is a living influence. John Updike can make a golf shot into an epiphany; Bernard Malamud can treat the life of a baseball player, and J. F. Powers the life of a Catholic priest, in terms of Arthurian myth; Salinger can invest the apparatus of modern urban life with a strange significance, even blessedness. John Hawkes can turn a ride on a Greyhound bus into a macabre nightmare. These writers, in short, use language to slice deep into experience, not merely to pare the surface.

I am not suggesting that contemporary American novelists have solved all their problems. The lack of any tradition of literary decorum is still a liability as

well as an asset. In those writers associated particularly with *The New Yorker*, the effort to submit the roughness and multiplicity of their material to the discipline of a measured and exact prose sometimes produces an effect of tortured preciousness, of strained urbanity, reminiscent of Hawthorne at his least happy moments. In what one might call the hipster wing of the American literary scene, embracing the Beats, Norman Mailer, William Burroughs, *et alii*, the traditional American indifference to decorum only encourages the fallacy that passionate commitment can compensate for formal incoherence, that "anything goes."

Saul Bellow's *Herzog* seems to me very representative of the strengths and weaknesses of contemporary American fiction. Whereas in British fiction today vitality seems to be exclusive to the uncouth, Herzog is alive *and* civilized, sensual *and* bookish. Bellow's nervously energetic prose, ransacking every level of contemporary English from slang to philosophical terminology, conveys a forceful impression of the multiplicity of modern consciousness, in which the sense of private and public crisis, of beauty mingled with squalor, of tenderness snatched out of horror, of tragedy wobbling on the brink of the absurd, are simultaneously present. This density of impression is felt particularly in the many superlative descriptions of Herzog's responses to the urban scene. But in the end one feels that Bellow overreaches himself, tries to make his hero bear the weight of too much meaning—or too much explicit meaning. In a very characteristically American way he seems impatient with the restraints of novelistic convention, and his urgent need to make his message heard and felt spills over into passages of unassimilated philosophizing.

Bellow strains, through bold metaphor and racy idiom, to make Herzog the vehicle for large generalizations about the plight of modern man. But the "ideas" remain ideas, with rather awkward demands upon our assent as ideas, and are not extensions of Herzog's character; and the effort to make Herzog measure up to their universality of reference betrays Bellow into a certain verbal excess, a desperate squandering bordering at times on incoherence of words. Bellow is not so much presenting his hero to the reader as colluding with his hero to impress the reader.

I am not enlisting in the currently fashionable pursuit of knocking *Herzog* because it is a popular success. The kind of flaw I find in it seems to me to run through a great deal of American literature and to be almost inseparable from what is vital in it. Certainly one must prefer a "failure" like *Herzog* to most "successes" in contemporary British fiction.

THE REALITY OF REAL PEOPLE



ALAN PRYCE-JONES

Every so often we are told that the novel is sick. At times it seems as though the novel were dying. And always the reason given is that the public prefers to read biographies.

The suggestion, I suppose, is that real people are more engrossing than imaginary ones. Even the most devoted of readers, granted a normal span of life, can hardly hope for more than 40,000 reading hours. Unless he has a professional interest in the matter, is he likely, then, to devote more than a quarter of that time to reading about things that never happened? 10,000 hours: I calculate that for a staunch reader the fiction quotient would amount to some 1,800 novels spread over sixty years. Too many, perhaps. No wonder the edges get nibbled away by history, *choses vues*, politics: the truth, in fact.

Yet, when one stops to think about it, there is really no sharp distinction between fiction and the rest of literature. In a sense, *War and Peace* is far "truer" than any biography, just as a great painter's portrait, final and judicious, is far "truer" than any number of brilliant sketches, catching only one angle out of many possibles. That is, I think, why the art of biography has been changing since the start of this century in the direction of placing its heroes, warts and all, in a dramatic light. It may be the fashion to decry Lytton Strachey, yet his sense of drama, allied to significant detail, has greatly affected those who came after him.

The classic example of the change is that between the two biographies of John Addington Symonds, the British critic. The earlier was written by his friend, Horatio F. Brown. Published seventy years ago in two stout volumes, it bowed to the conventions of the day. Symonds was a known homosexual, in spite of leaving behind him a widow and affectionate daughters. At no time would the book have been easy to write without causing them pain. But as his biographer of today, Phyllis Grosskurth (in *The Woeful Victorian*) remarks as an aside, "a biography which falsifies a man, changes events, and omits important facts, is less than the truth".

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To rectify the balance Dr. Grosskurth has put "the truth" as plainly as possible, not without conveying a certain sense of enjoyment in doing so. Her truth is scholarly and well-documented; is it her fault if it is also sensational?

The point has been reached at which anything like an official biography strikes the reader as in some way mendacious. Lord Birkenhead has lately published an excellent account of Lord Halifax, stressing inevitably the fact that Halifax, as well as possessing the qualities of a good ambassador and an occasional statesman, was also a typical English gentleman of the old school. This is a terrible thing to insinuate about anybody, and I have noticed that reviewers are much taken aback. They would not have cared a jot had Halifax been a pot-smoker or a flagellant; but to discover that he was at heart a country landlord who did not mind lending a hand in public affairs when he felt he had to, affected them grievously.

Responsibility for this attitude lies heavily with the old two-volume biography. There was a time when no eminence, however lusterless, was allowed to expire without the tribute of six hundred pages. Such respect is now paid only to the autobiographical heart-searching of generals. But the biography for a long time was rather like a tomb by Canova; it exalted the majesty of its subject at the expense of his human attributes.

With Strachey, however, the tradition which stretched from Theophrastus to John Aubrey was revived. Why, after all, should anyone read either a novel or a biography unless to plumb some unfamiliar depth of character? Take the political biographies which have abounded of late: Beaverbrook on Lloyd George, Sir Philip Magnus on Edward VII, Robert Rhodes James on Rosebery, Richard J. Whalen on "The Founding Father," Ambassador Joseph P. Kennedy. We read about such men, not in order to learn the lessons of history but because they were in themselves unusual folk, worthy to be discussed beside Mr. Casaubon, Dombey senior, Pierre Bezuhov, *Le père Goriot*, or any other giant of fiction. And there can be no doubt that the stamp of reality adds to their glamor. There are scores of novels about the upbringing of unhappy small boys

who triumph in the end: *Little Lord Fauntleroy* sets their tone admirably. But how when the little Lord is a real prince, like the unfortunate Prince Edward, living in a real castle like Windsor, and crushed not by some unfeeling old earl but by a Queen and a Prince Consort both? Or again, Dombey. We can applaud his family feeling even if it seems a trifle excessive; we can sympathize with his passion for little Paul. But how about a far vaster Dombey, with a whole quiver-full of little Pauls? It is certainly more exciting to read about the real Mr. Kennedy than an imaginary paterfamilias, and more encouraging, too, since Dickens, for the sake of his drama, could not resist piling on a series of catastrophes which appear far more artificial than the very real tribulations which have fallen upon the Ambassador.

The Inartistry of Life

And yet, though reality may pander to our love of being accurately in the picture, we shall never comprehend Mr. Kennedy as we comprehend Dombey. Fiction has only voluntary reticences. The novelist, as his public has reason to know, can come up with anything he pleases: a pinch of Freud here, the glimpse of a Jungian archetype there; he can explain to his heart's content, break into bawdy without fear of libel, tilt the facts this way and that to suit an intellectual purpose. And so Dickens can offer us his own Dombey, without any fear that a real human being will spring up and exclaim, "But I was not like that!" There are no Dombey papers to be sifted, Dombey heirs to be considered, Dombey decencies to be observed. When Dickens takes against Dombey he can punish him good and hearty for being the creature of Dickens' own imagination. Whereas the biographer has all the inartistry of life to cope with, as well as such facts as that each of us is punished irrelevantly, at the wrong time, for the wrong reasons, and to the wrong degree.

There are, of course, still such things as biographies designed to instruct. Everyone has vast gaps in what should be general knowledge. We take things on trust about real people just as we believe we have read certain books simply because we have read a great deal about them.

To meet this need, learned persons come up with biographies of men of whom we might easily speak in terms of nodding acquaintance, but who are, in fact, utterly strange to us. When Lord Kinross—the British peerage seems to have been unusually industrious at the typewriter of late—when Lord Kinross wrote an illuminating study of Atatürk a few months ago he was

writing about a household name which, until then, remained a name only, unattached to any clear personality or chain of historical events.

The same thing can easily happen nearer home. Critics and memorialists have for long been commenting on Edith Wharton, for instance; some, like Percy Lubbock, with hardly concealed dislike, others with the deference posterity still preserves toward somewhat formidable literary ladies—Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Emily Dickinson, George Eliot are only a few among those who nod imperiously from the grave. It needs a book like Millicent Bell's *Edith Wharton and Henry James* to breathe life into ancient patterns of conduct. And here again the biographer has an advantage over the novelist. For his is a process which not only can, but should, be recast from one generation to another, whereas the novelist makes his statement once only and for good.

Eminent influences change their meaning with the passing of time. Our grandparents, for instance, had a perfectly clear view of Queen Victoria. According to their temperament and ancestry they looked upon her as a snobbish old tyrant trying to rule the world through a system of dynastic alliances, an oppressor of the Irish, an empress truly imperial, an example to all wives and mothers, or a great bore. Whatever their reaction, they felt they were certainly in the right, just as our fathers, picking clues out of the contemporary air, knew just what they felt about Stalin or General MacArthur, and we ourselves feel on sure ground when we react to Castro or Dean Rusk.

Even established documents change with time. To pursue the case of Queen Victoria, her Letters and Journals, when the several volumes appeared, were normally taken at their face value, underlinings and all. A generation later they became absurd, a generation later again, touching. As time passed, the attitude of biographers changed. Lytton Strachey, writing in a period of full reaction against the Victorian spirit, began his researches in a spirit of hostility and gradually warmed to respect and an unwilling affection. It has taken her latest biographer, Lady Longford, however—again, the peerage—to stand back sufficiently from the nineteenth century to put the Queen in perspective.

Such a feat is beyond the powers of a contemporary. It may be fifty years before we have any accurate account of Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, beyond the praise or blame of their intimates, victims, adulators. Every so often an expert tries his hand, especially if he is a contentious expert like Professor A. J. P. Taylor. Was Hitler really so evilly calculating?, the expert may ask; and the answer he elicits is always a cry of outrage,

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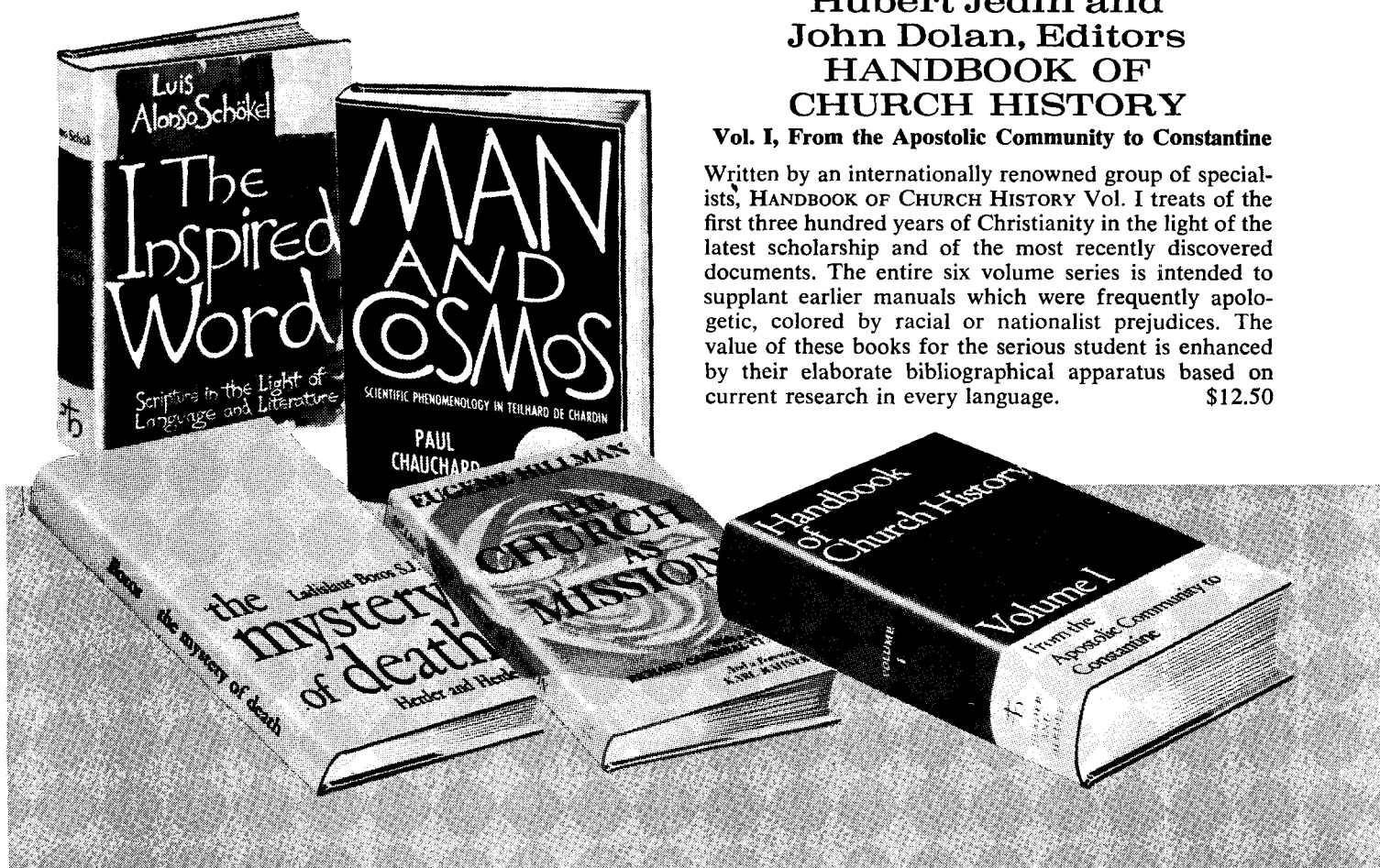
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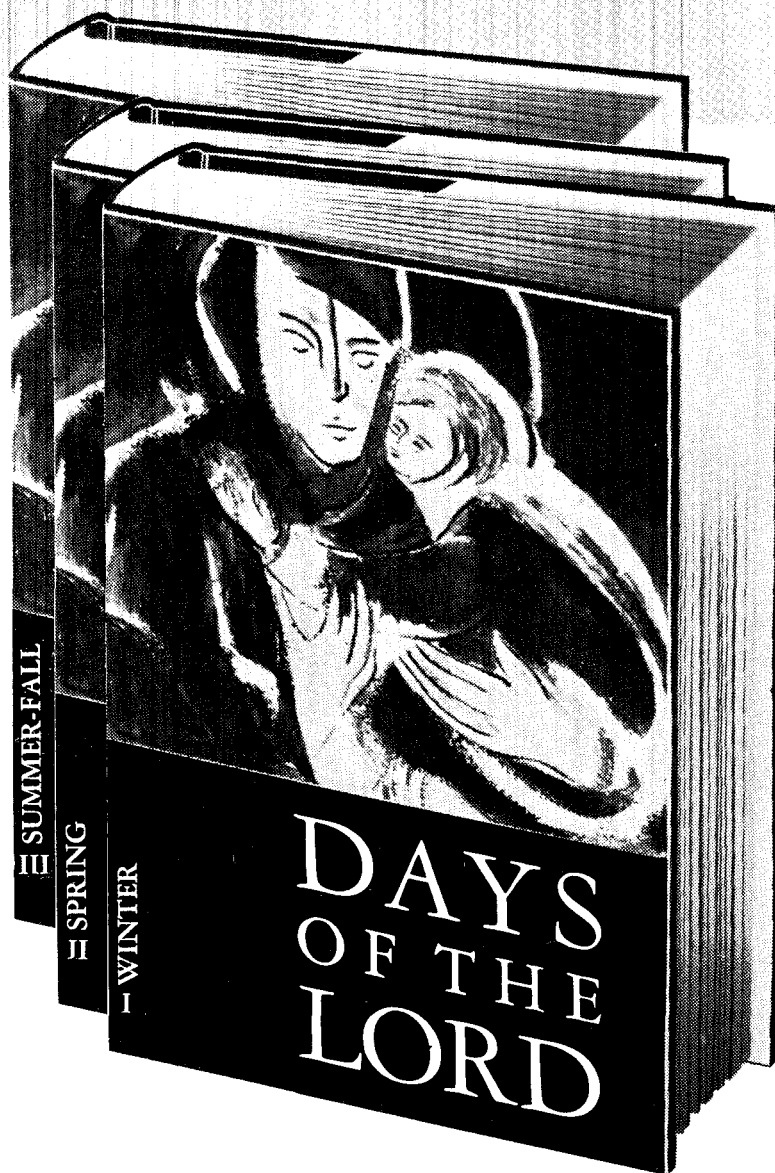
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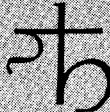
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so long as those who suffered under Hitler are still able to speak.

Yet sometimes I remember my own father, a professional soldier, insisting that my first trip abroad must be to the birthplace of, as he asserted, the greatest man in European history: Napoleon. A century earlier, through a British officer's eyes, Napoleon would have been a monster; twenty years later, after another world war, an irrelevancy.

There is thus little chance that the biographer's trade will go stale on him, since the last word on his characters can never, in the nature of things, be spoken. It is not even hard to spin a biography out of nothing, when the subject has some mythic quality, like Shakespeare, or Jack the Ripper. Dr. A. L. Rowse has written a most gripping novel-biography, based on the totally unsupported conviction that Shakespeare was Lord Southampton; nobody knows who Jack the Ripper was in life, but now that he is dead he is repeatedly identified with confidence as well as readability.

Most Enjoyable Biography

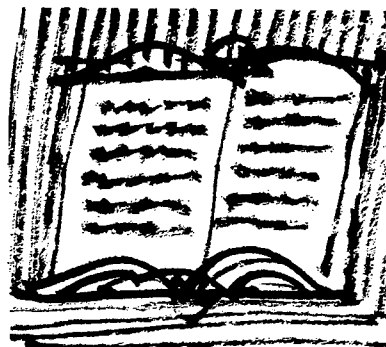
If I had to name the most enjoyable biography of recent times I might well choose Christopher Hassall's *Rupert Brooke*. Why? The book is very long. Brooke was young when died, and by no means a fully formed poet. He belongs to an age which is just below our own horizon, an age of peculiar darkness, therefore, which will only rise into light again when time has vindicated its problems and attitudes. Yet Hassall's book casts a spell. Partly this is on account of its leisureliness. Not only Brooke, but his family, his friends, his anxieties and satisfactions, unfold. Hitherto he had been known as a young man much loved, a legend in his own lifetime, beautiful, intelligent, probably—one thought, not without jealousy—a bit insipid. Now, for the first time, we know him better than his own coevals, for we can see him in the coherent framework of a narrative, and find him far more interesting than his legend ever suggested. He had loves. And there are the letters they wrote. He suffered from complexes quite familiar to us but unknown, we thought, among the gilded Edwardians who never knew Freud. He had a splendidly emphatic character, enough wit, and a number of unexpected opinions. It is as though Hassall had released a genie from his bottle.

At any moment now a biography will appear which may well match this: probably it will have done so by the time these words are in print. The subject has something of the same legendary quality as Rupert Brooke for those who lived twenty-five years later, for it has

been the fashion, during two decades, to speak with bated breath of Dylan Thomas.

Other books on him have appeared, including a kind of strangled threnody from his widow which sorely taxed the charity of its readers. But now we are to have what promises to be an acceptable account of him by Constantine Fitzgibbon—a writer with something of the skill, the picaresque talent, and the warmth possessed by Thomas himself.

It is hard to be a legend at thirty; harder still at twenty; hardest of all perhaps, to die a spectacle before



you are forty. The novelist could hardly embark on the tale of such career without turning it into a morality; as it is, those who knew Thomas, with the exception of Edith Sitwell, have found it hard to write about him without leaving a disagreeable impression of cashing in on the untimely death of a poet. Now a little time has passed, a little sediment has fallen; and at last a writer of talent is turning an objective eye on one who deserves to be remembered accurately, rather than dressed up for the martyrs' *auto-da-fe*.

Obviously, biographers like writing about odd fish. I would not have missed Louise Hall Tharp's *Mrs. Jack*, which tells the story of Bostonian Mrs. Gardner and her museum, nor Lately Thomas' *Sam Ward*, which has revived an old rogue who knew exactly how to exploit the growing pains of New York and Washington. In a different field I would not have missed Lord David Cecil's *Max*, even if it carries out an operation rather like catching a butterfly in a coach and four. No more delicious writer than Max Beerbohm has lived into this century. But, really, to be the subject of a fat book is somehow beside the point for a talent so delicate that it asked, not a biography at all, but to be imprisoned in an enormous Steinberg pencil line.

And there have lately been as well some entirely digestible books on public figures I might never have read much about: John Connell's *Wavell*, for one, and Louis W. Koenig's stimulating book on Mr. Truman, *The Chief Executive*. Not to mention good books on

subjects in themselves barely digestible at all, such as Robert Koch's on Louis Tiffany and Jacques Cabaud's on Simone Weil.

Indeed, at times I feel myself like the victim at an identification parade, scanning a line of faces and asking, Is it you? Is it you? Autobiographers must sadly be dismissed for the most part as a bunch of more or less successful liars. Poets designedly speak through a mask. Novelists of the newest schools prefer any effect to the delineation of character or the hairspring movement of plot. Real people in real life are mostly afraid, I notice, at any prospect of dropping a veil. At

least in the United States they are. There remain the subjects of biography. I walk along the line, appraising, wondering. I hesitate before Joan Haslip's version of Elizabeth of Austria in *The Lonely Empress*. Is it really true that she turned against her Emperor because quite early on he infected her with a venereal disease? I hurry on to Frieda Lawrence, Harold Wilson, Sir Sydney Cockerell, Edwin Arlington Robinson: what a *galère*. Should I desert them for the brothers Karamazov? No, for the ultimate truth is that the heroes and heroines of the daily world are very much stranger than the imaginary constructions of fiction.

Pound's fugal music

READING THE CANTOS



MICHAEL RECK

A dear friend of mine, rather given to bombast and overstatement, once declared "Everything Ezra Pound has written is *sacred* to me." I was a bit taken aback, and asked if he wouldn't care to qualify that statement *at all*. "Well, I haven't read *The Cantos*," he admitted.

It turned out that my friend's opinion was based on Pound's earlier verse collection *Personae*, while the epic poem *The Cantos* (by far Pound's most important work) he considered impossible to read. As a severe Latinophile and teacher of Latin, he had every right to admire the *Personae*, for many of these are — to paraphrase a remark of Ford Madox Ford — the best Latin poems in the English language. And there is no doubt that *The Cantos* are difficult, often more difficult than they should be (which Pound himself admitted in a recent interview in the *Paris Review*). But one should not, therefore, summarily dismiss this extraordinarily beautiful and rewarding poem.

Life magazine calls *The Cantos* "turgid" (in a 1964 article on Pound). Nothing could be less true. The *Life* reporter, who himself writes rather turgidly, perhaps does not know what turgid means. There is nothing pompous or inflated about Pound's style, which in fact is of a crystalline clarity and precision. What gives difficulty is the range of reference. Pound's poem has

an enormous scope, and he doesn't care to load it down with identification of his references. "Where are we?" he writes, with his usual candidness, at the beginning of Canto 21. The reader often wonders too.

The best way of approaching *The Cantos* is simply to stride right through the poem, letting the words fall on your ear, keeping calm and self-possessed even when arrantly obscure names and quotations appear on the way. Your purpose is to enjoy the sound, and pick up what beauty and entertainment you can. This first hike might be lively enough to make you want to learn more about what is happening. You next turn to *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound* or *Guide to Kulchur* or *The Letters of Ezra Pound*, all of which are in themselves rewarding enough to read. Then back to *The Cantos*, as you are presumably by now a bit further into Pound's world. This time more light will probably appear. If needed, the *Annotated Index to the Cantos of Ezra Pound* by John H. Edwards and William W. Vasse (University of California Press, 1959), while not absolutely reliable, will help clarify obscure points. But looking up every reference is a dull business, probably not recommendable until you are at an advanced stage of reading *The Cantos*. Better let the poem sing to you.

"Great bulk, huge mass, thesaurus," begins Canto 5 — and this we can take as describing all *The Cantos*. Pound has spread his net wide; he wants to tell "the tale of the tribe," to "give the true meaning of history as one man has found it." Epics have always done this,

MICHAEL RECK, making his initial appearance in COMMONWEAL, is a faculty member at the University of Puerto Rico who is now doing research in Germany under a fellowship.

but now cultures are coalescing, communications are much quicker, and our history is the whole world's. "When it comes to the question of poetry, a great many people don't want to know that their own country does not occupy *all* the available surface of the planet," Pound complains.

Languages Exist

Hence we find a good dozen languages represented in *The Cantos*. To the criticism that the reader cannot be expected to know so many languages, Pound said at Saint Elizabeth's, in effect: "I can't deny that these languages *exist*. They are there. I only put them in the poem." He wrote Hubert Creekmore: "I believe that when finished, *all* foreign words in the *Cantos*, Greek, etc., will be underlinings, not necessary to the sense, in one way. I mean a complete sense will exist without them; it will be there in the American text, but the Greek, ideograms, etc., will indicate a *duration* from where or since when. If you can find any *briefier* means of getting this repeat or resonance, tell papa, and I will try to employ it."

That is, the foreign quotations are there to increase *The Cantos'* time and space scale. And Pound adds, "All typographic disposition, placings of words *on* the page, is intended to facilitate the reader's intonation, whether he be reading silently to self or aloud to friends. Given time and technique I might even put down the musical notation of passages or 'breaks into song.' There is *no intentional* obscurity. There is condensation to maximum attainable. It is impossible to make the deep as quickly comprehensible as the shallow."

It might be added, in Pound's defense, that there *are* things which can be said in one language and not in another. The Chinese ideograms really cannot be translated; Greek, Latin, Provencal, French have their own idioms and music unrenderable in English. Pound often uses words in foreign tongues because he is fascinated with the sound.

Pound admired the Japanese Noh drama program — a one-day series of plays — because, he said, it gave "a complete diagram of life." His intuition that literature should set forth a whole view of the world, in this century of skepticism and intellectual fragmentation, found expression in *The Cantos*. Like the *Divine Comedy*, *The Cantos* intend to show good and evil — Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise — and they roughly correspond to Dante's three-part organization. The first Canto describes a descent to Hell (Odysseus'); Cantos 14, 15, and the beginning of 16 depict a Hell; the publisher's blurb to the Rock Drill section (whose style bears

traces of having been written by Pound) says that with Canto 90 *The Cantos* "move into their third and final phase: the 'domination of benevolence'." However, it is difficult to see where Pound's Inferno shades off into a Purgatorio.

In his *Paris Review* interview, the poet offered some very interesting illumination of the question of *The Cantos'* organization: "I was not following the three divisions of the *Divine Comedy* exactly. One can't follow the Dantesque cosmos in an age of experiment. But I have made the division between people dominated by emotion, people struggling upwards, and those who have some part of the divine vision. The thrones in Dante's *Paradiso* are for the spirits of the people who have been responsible for good government. The thrones in the *Cantos* are an attempt to move out from egoism and to establish some definition of an order possible or at any rate conceivable on earth."

But he admitted, "It is difficult to write a paradiso when all the superficial indications are that you ought to write an apocalypse. It is obviously much easier to find inhabitants for an inferno or even a purgatorio." Pound recognized that Dante's mathematically exact organization was not suited to the more complex twentieth century. He wrote R. P. Blackmur: "And we agree, *je crois*, that one can no longer put Mt. Purgatory forty miles high in the midst of Australian sheep land."

All Time Is Eternally Present

Already in *The Spirit of Romance*, published in 1910, Pound expresses the view of time that is basic to *The Cantos*: "It is dawn at Jerusalem while midnight hovers above the Pillars of Hercules. All ages are contemporaneous." This idea that all time is eternally present seems to have strongly influenced T. S. Eliot, for the structure of *The Waste Land* is founded on it, and the concept appears also in the *Four Quartets*. *The Cantos* bring all history before us, live and of this moment — one of their brilliant achievements. A trick to achieve immediacy is Pound's repeated use of the first-person pronoun. The poet takes on the masks of a variety of historical personages and *becomes* these people. The effect is to make the past astonishingly alive, and the poem achieves an epic scope in its wide sweep of time.

Among the speculations of his booklet *A Packet for Ezra Pound*, William Butler Yeats described *The Cantos* as a fugue. At Saint Elizabeth's Pound declared that Yeats' essay had done more than anything to create confusion about *The Cantos*, and suggested that he had followed, rather, the "ideogrammatic method" in composing the poem. This, in Pound's terminology, is the

method of juxtaposition followed by the Chinese in creating new and compound ideograms. Two or more ideograms are put together to make a new ideogram; understood as a whole, they create a new meaning. This also is often the method of Chinese poetry. Seemingly disparate objects are described seriatim. They are felt to modify one another and, perceived together, they express a sentiment, a mood, or an atmosphere. The whole is greater than the parts. Probably because of Pound's influence on him, Eliot used the "ideogrammatic method" in *The Waste Land* and, notably, in *Rhapsody on a Windy Night*.

It is hard to say why Pound was so violently against Yeats' idea that *The Cantos* are a fugue (which, Yeats wrote, was how Pound himself expressed it, at Rapallo in 1929). He may have felt that Yeats' view suggested

a formal over-all organization, implying that the formal aspects were more important than the poem's content. But I am not sure that we can abandon the analogy with music. In addition to the fact that every line of *The Cantos* is interesting for its rhythm and verbal melody, the whole structure has a musicality. As in music, themes appear and are repeated. There are variations on these themes, which please because they meet or deceive our expectations. Many individual phrases and verse lines, melodic and moving in themselves, return again and again, as a horn may suddenly resound amid the strings in an orchestra. Whatever the cause, *The Cantos* do sound good, very good, when heard. Mrs. Pound told me she always advises people to approach *The Cantos* by reading them aloud.

And that seems to me the wisest way.

A novelist's vision

CARLO COCCIOLI



THOMAS F. STALEY

As R. W. B. Lewis has pointed out, the conventional spiritual values of 19th-century fiction were seriously affected on the first page of the first book by James Joyce. The opening lines of *Dubliners*, written in 1904, described a young boy's feeling for a dying, paralyzed priest. Joyce viewed the disintegration of values in Western Europe and Britain in the context of the dying Catholic Church, and its fall from a rich heritage to a priest-ridden, sterile remnant filled with ashen gray faces of dictatorial, sub-human priests and crippled old ladies.

The generation of novelists which succeeded him were no less concerned with the sensibility of death than Joyce, but organized religion had no meaning for them even as a point of view. Sartre's, Franz Kafka's and Camus' fiction is deeply rooted in the syndrome of European existentialism and expresses itself in terms of the individual essentially alienated or removed from any supernatural source. On the other hand, the searching novels of Mauriac, Bernanos and Graham Greene, whose art rises out of the well-spring of Catholicism,

offer the reader little solace within the cloisters of hell on earth, whatever blurred vision of redemption they may assert.

Carlo Coccioli, the Italian novelist who writes in French and lives in Mexico, has explored both views of the world. His novel *Heaven and Earth* is saturated with Catholic tradition and symbols. His priest-hero, while hardly conventional, clings to the permanent faith of his Church and his priesthood. Coccioli's latest novel, *The White Stone*, appeared in America in 1960; in it he explores man's dilemma in a world without God, using the same priest as his hero. Perhaps it is in Coccioli's fiction that the cycle begun by Joyce will reach its full fruition; where the novelist brings his hero to the epistemological question where no truth is accepted as given, where no man is able to avoid the confrontation of man or God whether or not he accepts either in the end. Coccioli's reputation on the Continent is well recognized, but like his fellow countryman Italo Svevo before him, he had not been widely regarded in his native Italy until critics in France and Belgium compared him favorably with Moravia and Carlo Levi as Italy's foremost novelists; in America all of his works are out of print.

For Sartre, man is thrust into the world and despairs

THOMAS F. STALEY, who has contributed articles to various literary journals, is a professor of English at the University of Tulsa and Editor of the James Joyce Quarterly.

at the meaninglessness surrounding him. For Camus, the relation of man to the world is absurd, but he attests that man must continue to live with the absurd and endure its confounding paradox. Kafka's image of the world is that of the labyrinth, the continued search for meaning where every path leads to confusion and loss of identity.

The Christian writer who is consciously dedicated to the realization of a true Christian vision of reality sees a world far more hopeful, but to view this world of hope and order in fiction often seems equivocal in the 20th century. In a specifically Catholic sense, writers such as Greene, Mauriac and Bernanos are concerned with the sacramental life; and while they are not pious, or never smug, they yearn nostalgically for the lost age of faith. The most beautiful visions of their heroes are the rich history of the Church of the past. The hero in one of Greene's novels yearns for an older Church, an "underground" Church, a persecuted Church, able to be pure once again. Mauriac's aspiring priest in *The Lamb* speaks of his faith in the imagery of battle: "... That a day would come, please God, when he would emerge from his Novitiate fortified and armed against all such snares, when this gift of his, finally sublimated, would be to him as a weapon with which to achieve the conquest of Grace."

Coccioli in Two Worlds

Coccioli is not without this vision of an older order, but his approach is far different. The hero in *The White Stone* is forced to look at the world without any hope in Divine Redemption. And if he equivocates, it is only at the last dramatic moment, after all else has been explored, that he says, "I believe!"

Coccioli's fiction absorbs the reader in both milieux. The hero of *The White Stone*, Don Ardito Piccardi, is a Catholic priest who loses his faith and regains it, but the circumstances of his loss of faith and subsequent alienation from God give us a striking portrayal of a man who has entered both worlds, who, on the one hand, is acutely aware of his responsibility to his fellow man in a universe which is clearly absurd and where man is merely an accident; while, on the other hand, he is continuously haunted by a strong religious vision which is indelibly Christian and sacramental. Coccioli's hero is not a split personality, nor does he try to make both worlds compatible. The world without faith that he experiences is much more illuminating for him because in it he sees his essential responsibility as a man; his ultimate acceptance of God is all the more meaningful for what he has been. It is from the

incomprehensible universe, without a first cause and with all its absurdity, that Don Ardito ultimately finds unity with man and God.

Camus once called religion intellectual suicide. He went on to say that religion provides man with a false sense of security in an essentially absurd world, and if a man takes on a Christian philosophy that views the world as only a temporary disorder, after which everything will make sense, he begins to abdicate his human responsibilities. Existentialism is a philosophy of disorientation; Christianity presupposes a philosophy of orientation. Don Ardito, content in his faith, willing to die for the young Italian guerrillas in the name of his priesthood, sees only a world of order, even in death, until he loses his faith. Later he writes in his diary: "I have to admit that the world did not collapse the moment I felt that God did not exist. I must also admit that the things which I thought inextricably linked to God and dependent upon Him exist in themselves, the destruction of God did not provoke their destruction. The only consequence of the death of God is that they become incomprehensible."

Torn from the original meaning of his existence, Don Ardito sets out on a spiritual journey, or quest, into a world where the supernatural or divine no longer has any meaning.

World War II, and its aftermath, is an appropriate background for a man's loss of faith. Captain Rauch, the German officer who refuses to give Don Ardito his martyrdom, arranges for a mock firing squad after he has been captured, so that Ardito's friends will believe him martyred for the cause; but Rauch arranges to have him sent away secretly to a concentration camp after the faked execution. Surrounded by medieval symbols of the older Church in an Italian castle, Don Ardito is blindfolded (symbolic of his blind faith) and lined up to be shot. The shots ring out --

"Then silence. In that silence a strange thing happened: I was enveloped by the smell of blood, as if I had been led through a slaughterhouse. But it was my own smell, and I knew it. Someone told me once that I smelled of blood. I never realized it until that moment. In the silence that followed the firing I knew that I had always smelled of blood, ever since birth. Then another strange thing happened: I moved. I made a barely perceptible movement, but I made it. And there I was, leaning against a wall in that court yard in the pale light of dawn, and terribly cold. A question rose up inside me, a question: What am I doing here? Suddenly I had a new and frightening awareness of time and place, but in that new dimension there was something missing. There was a dark pit. A moment before

it had been filled by God. A moment later there was only an emptiness."

It is from this dramatic moment, when God is suddenly drained from him, that Don Ardito's journey begins. His condition echoes Rilke's words from *Der Olbaumgarten*.

I am alone with all man's grief,
which I tried to heal through Thee,
Thou who art not. O nameless shame. . .

The quest for meaning without God takes Don Ardito to the ends of the earth. Eastern Europe, France, Mexico and back to Italy. The world becomes an absurd vacuum. Camus defines the absurd as the conjunction of man's need for an explanation and reality's inability to give one; or Sartre, who in *La Nauseé* suggests that things exist gratuitously, without cause, in defiance of reason — this is the world that Don Ardito explores after God has no meaning for him. His quest brings him into contact with a bizarre cast of characters; the "Commando" priests in France; Augustan Nevers, who under Don Ardito's influence becomes a priest in spite of Ardito's insistence that there is no God; Mr. Page, the archetype of Satan; and a series of characters from out of the Godless Europe of the Fifties.

C., (Coccioli himself), the figure in the novel who pieces together from interviews, diaries and letters Don Ardito's life after his loss of belief, is at first a reluctant detective. He asks early in the novel, ". . . that Lazarus, what does he want from me?"

Significantly enough, from the outset C. identifies Don Ardito as a Lazarus figure, an appropriate archetype for twentieth century wanderers — the Biblical man who was raised from the dead and who lives on the Mount of Olives. Ardito is the modern Lazarus, without faith, love, or community — the alienated man. Alienated from his fellow man, from his priesthood, but destined to bear witness for God in whom he no longer believes; he is the man who has encountered nothingness, who is utterly disengaged and empty. Throughout the novel there are continual references to Don Ardito's malaise, his thirst, his sallow face, his distant and preoccupied stare — all characteristics of the Lazarus archetype. His near experiences with death in Italy and at the concentration camp, his rejection of God, his painful hegira in Eastern Europe, his shooting in Mexico, are all facets of Coccioli's portrayal of the modern Lazarus figure.

But like Par Lagerkvist in his tetralogy, Coccioli insists upon a moral consideration — Don Ardito must continually bear witness to man's plight. He must search for something beyond survival and compatible with resurrection and immortality. He is forced to do

this in a world "conceived like a machine which would not function without its engine." Like Lazarus, naked and desolate, Don Ardito must explore the mystery handed to him from Chapter II of the Apocalypse, which is intricately tied to the theme of the novel: "To him that conquereth, I will give the hidden manna, and I will give a white stone, and upon the stone a new name written which no one knoweth, except him that receiveth it."



The full cycle of Don Ardito's faith, loss of faith and return is completed as he is shot and nearly killed when he harbors young Profiro Galvan in a church near a lonely village in Mexico from Antonio Rodriguez and his men who are trying to kill the young boy. Don Ardito picks up an ugly iron cross from the altar of the Blessed Virgin, walks out of the small church of Malpan with the Cross held high in his right hand and shouts "God!" He is immediately felled by two shots, but Rodriguez and his men flee, leaving the boy whom they had set out to kill. Ardito falls in the Mexican dust: "When he opened his eyes, his first words were 'I want to confess.'" This scene stands in direct contrast to the aborted execution by the firing squad at the castle.

These two scenes with their similar sacrifice and willing death are in dramatic opposition to each other. The first results in Don Ardito's loss of faith, the second in his faith regained. In the castle, Don Ardito is all too willing to die blindfolded; content with his martyrdom, his thoughts of God and miracles place him in a mystical state far removed from the needs and wants of men. He is at peace with God and the world; he can accept the disorder and chaos of a war-torn world as God's will. He stands ready to die as a medieval Crusader, untouched by the longing of men.

The second scene in the courtyard of the little church holds far different implications. Coccioli insists that man's needs are not answered in the Church alone. Don Ardito takes the Cross from the church and bears it out among men. Symbolically enough, it is in this dramatic bearing of the cross outside of the

church that climaxes Don Ardito's recognition of his priestly mission, but not before the long night of Gethsemane in the lonely church with the young Mexican who reveals his own wandering search and lost heritage as a half breed cut off from both cultures.

The profound Christian affirmation of Don Ardito which takes place at the end of the novel is not without its echo of ambiguity, for the priest dies alone and obscure, never able to reveal the message on the white stone. The message remains a private symbol, a symbol for all men to ponder — the answers of faith are private and not universal, Coccioli seems to insist. In *The White Stone* there is no superimposition of the author's theological resolution upon the drama. Like *Billy Budd*, the Christian reconciliation in Coccioli's novel is not clear cut; it remains for the reader to ponder the strange life of Don Ardito Piccardi whose existential conviction seems to lay as strong a claim on him as his Christian.



ADELYN O'CONNELL, R.S.C.J.

PHYSICIAN TO LAZARUS

I have forbidden them to speak of it;
not, as you think, because I fear that death
(or what they call his death) but rather
the uncertainty. Over and over
I have asked myself 'did you condemn him
to the tomb a living man,
you who are skilled in life?
Was that the miracle that he should come
too late whose grief demanded
one last sight of that decaying body
four days dead? Was that the miracle,
a mere coincidence—your error
and his grief?'

Yet on the other hand
let us suppose the fact. Because I found
no life in him I called him dead, and—
grieving—buried him. What skill is it
that calls a man from death to life?
And have I then no right to style myself
physician when I shout 'Come forth'
and there is only emptiness and echo
in reply? At night I ask myself
'if he can do this thing, if he can
call a man from death to life like Lazarus,
what deaths have I to die
before I live?'

MINTZ MEAT AND APPLESAUCE



THE STAGE

The new season continues to sputter, like an old car which has a little more trouble starting every year.

"A Very Rich Woman" marks fifty years of Ruth Gordon on Broadway; so probably the thing to do is just to send along greetings from the gang at the Y, and let it go at that. But Miss Gordon's name, along with that of her husband, Garson Kanin, invokes somber reflections. For these two are masters of the standard Broadway comedy, and the standard Broadway comedy has come upon bad times. In fact, "A Very Rich Woman" (which features also such antediluvians as Ernest Truex and Madge Kennedy) has almost the look of a wake.

This kind of play is still called, for sentimental reasons, commercial comedy; but it has long ceased to be that. Nowadays nothing does more modest business than the standard Broadway comedy. Of the several that opened last season (e.g. "Beekman Place," "P.S. I Love You") not one survived to become even a semi-demi-hit. That they continued to appear at all is a triumph of occupational unreality. Uncommercial plays could hardly do worse.

Groping for an illuminating generalization (and for an excuse not to talk about the play: Miss Gordon deserves a better fate), one finds the basic comedy easier to recognize than it is to describe. It tends to be whimsical, vivacious, huge fun. It also tends to have been translated from the French, but not recently. This one is about an eccentric old lady and various amusing attempts to have her declared insane. Another one might be about a world-weary uncle who suddenly turns up to embarrass everyone — well, you know the kind of thing. Watching the basic comedy is like stepping into a time capsule, and drifting back to some Edwardian lawn party, to a world where people really had uncles and where eccentric old ladies still counted for something. The anachronisms may not always be so blatant and they may be swaddled in a thick coat of topical reference, but the world-view, the psycho-socio-economico-Weltanschauung is straight Freddie Lonsdale: the world-view of people who have been in the theater for the last 50 years, and have missed all developments outside.

Clearly, you can't get mad at these plays, any more than you can get mad at anecdotes about Noel Coward

or the mystique of Sardi's. Their only crime is taking up space, and they generally don't take it up for long. "New thing" comedies, like "Luv" or "The Knack" which borrow eclectically from films, popular psychiatry, Jules Feiffer and the prevailing anxiety, are something else. Those you can argue with. Miss Gordon you simply congratulate on being seventy years young, on being a grand lady of the theater and on having kept her brow splendidly unlined for fifty marvelous years. (*At the Belasco Theatre*)

Two one-act plays by Arkady Leokum, called "Friends" and "Enemies," advertise themselves straight out as show-cases for Eli Mintz, the character-actor. Mr. Mintz might be variously described as a serious performer with a Borscht base, as one of nature's delicatessen owners, or as a Yiddish Barry Fitzgerald; in any case, he is very pleasant company for half an hour or so. His resources wear a bit thin over a whole evening (as whose do not?), but his two parts are sufficiently different to give him a second wind in the middle, and even when he is running through his tricks for the third or fourth time he manages to seem like an awfully nice fellow.

The plays themselves are like wind-up toys, that turn this way and that until they run down. In the first one, a waiter and his customer exchange power-positions, and back; in the second, a rich little boy and his old tutor do likewise. Either play would do better on its own, because the clock-work nature of the playwright's mind would not be quite so apparent in a single shot. As it is, I preferred the first one partly because it came first and partly because Mintz makes a better waiter than a tutor.

Each of the plays is a kind of Marxist theorem, demonstrating that vice and virtue, arrogance and humility are simply restatements of the economic situation. In "Friends" the waiter starts out nice and the customer starts out nasty. Then it appears that the waiter actually owns the building, and presto, *he* turns into the rat, etc. In "Enemies" the little boy is the original fink, until the tutor threatens him with a spot of blackmail, at which point—and let's give that one or two et ceteras.

The theorem is a rigid literary form, but the first one more or less works out. It tells some truths about waiters and customers (a Marxist relationship if ever there was one) and Jay Barney brings an actuality to the customer, a sense of "this is how things are in second-class restaurants," which conceals the machinery of the plotting nicely. But in "Enemies" Danny Fortus invests the boy with a sheer malignity that is beyond anything that the geometric situation can account for; and in so

doing, he bursts the bonds of the play and demands for himself a better one, with a richer set of motives and explanations. (*At the Theatre East*)

WILFRID SHEED

WHAT MAKES MICKEY RUN?



THE SCREEN

If ever a movie is typical film-festival-fare, it is "Mickey One," which I saw at the Third New York Film Festival, held last month at Lincoln Center. I attended twenty of the twenty-five pictures shown at the Festival and liked it among the best, far better, in fact, than Godard's "Alphaville" which opened the two-week session. "Mickey One," imaginatively directed by Arthur Penn, who also produced it, should have been the lead-off item since it is more inventive, stimulating, and New Wave than the science-fiction movie by Godard, who is one of the original Nouvelle Vague directors.

Don't ask me to explain "Mickey One." It is about a mediocre night-club comedian who is running and running from he's not sure what or whom, perhaps from debts, gamblers, the mob, or just out of fear of the dark at the top of the stairs. In any case, he's running — perhaps from himself—and when he gets to Chicago, where most of the film is set, he destroys his old Social Security card, swipes someone else's, and becomes Mickey One as a dishwasher in a cafeteria. But once an actor, always an actor, and he soon yearns for the booze joints and spotlight again. Though helped by his agent and the pretty young girl he's living with, he dreads auditions, the future, the somebody "who owns me." He runs again — until he takes a stand: "This time I ran out of running."

The story and script by A.M. Surgal are as vague as they sound; and the allegory is overloaded with symbols. But Penn has dished all this up in first-rate cinema, and he holds our interest, grips us with suspense, and makes us feel Mickey's fear even when we're not sure what all this is about. Warren Beatty gives his best performance to date as the running, frightened man; as a comedian he is amazingly without humor, but Mickey is not a very good entertainer; he is one of those sad young men who take themselves so seriously that they have no time for living. One of the film's few light scenes, however, shows Mickey, temporarily on the mend, playing and gamboling with his girl (lovely Alexandria Stewart) as they romp through

Chicago. Another bright, light moment comes when Mickey and his girl see an Oriental artist's wacky mobile named "Yes" (Yes is freedom, yes is courage). The mobile explodes in fireworks that bring out the Chicago fire department — and some much needed laughs. The artist who appears again and again throughout the film is a rather sweet character reminiscent of Saroyan's little people. Mickey's agent (Teddy Hart) is a grim laugh-getter. And Hurd Hatfield, as an esthete and sinister front for the vague bosses, adds another alarm to the picture's tone of terror.

Arthur Penn conveys this terror well; perhaps the cloudy symbols and vague story increase the terror; but I'd have settled for a little more clarity. The black-and-white photography of Chicago is fine, and so are many of the unusual location shots. Even if you're not a devotee of Kafka, you may find "Mickey One" up your alley. It is even likely that the film is trying to say that Mickey is Everyman, who must at times stand in the glare of the spotlight and see himself for what he is. And whether or not he likes what he is, he must finally stop running and take a stand. Whatever the message, the dream-like, nightmarish effect in "Mickey One" is fascinating, fanciful cinema.

And while we're on the subject of odd characters, something must be said about "Bunny Lake Is Missing." Producer-director Otto Preminger's latest opus is a mystery-thriller. It is not a New Wave affair, but an old-fashioned kind of movie full of strange characters,

absorbing details some of which prove to be red herrings, clues that add up, and a series of performances that are excellent. It is also a difficult film to review, because revealing too much of the suspenseful plot would spoil the suspense.

When Ann Lake (Carol Lynley), in process of moving from one London flat to another with her brother (Keir Dullea), discovers that her daughter whom she insists she took to school that morning is missing, she becomes frantic and hysterical. Her brother soothes her and calls in the police. But during the course of the excitement and cross-questions, the inspector (Laurence Olivier) begins to wonder if there ever was a Bunny Lake. When Bunny continues to be missing, however, the suspects continue to increase and include the Lake's new landlord — a queer fish (Noel Coward) with an admiration for de Sade and another weirdie (Martita Hunt) who lives in an apartment on top of the school. Before the film is finished you get to know every corner of this Little People's Garden School as the Lakes, the inspector, the police, *and* the camera search for Bunny — even in places where you hope she won't be found. "Bunny Lake" is an interesting movie, longer than it need be because scriptwriters John and Penelope Mortimer throw in more side issues than necessary, and perhaps too easy for mystery fans who will guess the solution. But it's a handsome, well-acted and exciting film, even if its loop holes are too big and its events not always believable. "Bunny" may be too bountiful, but it's no bore.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG

BOOKS



A new direction for Moravia's stories

The Fetish

ALBERTO MORAVIA

Farrar, Straus, \$4.95

ALICE MAYHEW

Most of the forty-one contrived and mechanical short stories in this Moravia collection are nothing more than anecdotes six or seven pages long—inconclusive, ineffectual, unvaried. The hard-nosed, rough and tortured characters of Moravia's early books and stories are gone; so is any pretension to narrative. These stories resemble his last novel,

The Empty Canvas ("La Noia," or *Boredom*), which was a plotless and laconic treatise on alienation, nothingness and the absurd. It was later made into an appalling movie with Bette Davis playing the mother of the existentialist ghoul, which isn't worth discussing, except that it pointed up not only the thinness of the content, but also the constant factor in Moravia's work—that his prose can distract from the lack of content by its enormous technical prowess.

Moravia's vintage works were real live stories about desperate, frightened,

determined, materially threatened people; about survival, sometimes with honor, sometimes without it; evil; Italy writhing in the horrors of fascism from which he himself was a refugee. His writing was intense, straitened and seductively pessimistic. But now, to judge by the last two books published here at least, Moravia has given up interest in everything except elucidating other people's dynamic philosophic discoveries. These stories are not served by symbolism and technique, but dominated by them. All forty-one appear primarily thematic—they arise to make

their points and slip away enigmatically.

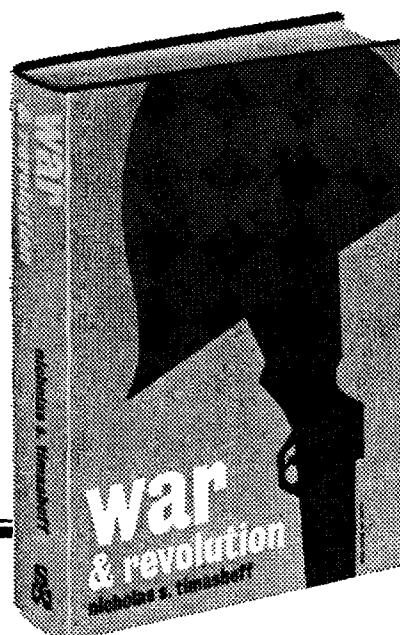
Moravia is one of the craftiest writers alive, and his prose remains sparse and hard; his descriptions, precise and calculating; his world, tactile. The stories, however, with rare exceptions are interchangeable. Collections by the same author are difficult to read in any case. There are too many rapidly-sprung climaxes, lessons on identical points, and the view and tone of voice tend to be monotonous. But reading these particular forty-one stories, it is difficult to avoid incurable *déjà vu*.

Much of what the people in Moravia's stories do is inexplicable. That apparently is the point. One man who does make a serious attempt to explain to himself whether he has good reason to suspect his wife of infidelity finds in the end that what he had decided had been a dream is reality. And what (because it was too horrifying to accept) he has convinced himself was a dream had really occurred, but can be explained innocently away. He is a cuckold either way; life is a derisory affair. One concludes that the wife and her lover (if he is) just want to confuse him.

Another story asks the question: "What [do] you mean when you say that you thought of me?" and answers it: What do you mean, what do I mean?

These stories, in short, have a pale, imitative, existentialist lingo and are set in neutral gloom. The characters are satiated, disgusted, frustrated, but they share only a mutual susceptibility to inscrutability. One character, "... had difficulty in believing that so unpleasing a face [in the mirror] could be his own"; another finds "... no enjoyment in anything and did not understand anything"; a third makes the scarcely interesting observation that, "... man is not lonely because he is alone; he is lonely if he feels alone." And so on.

One description of a scatterbrain conveys something of what cumulatively passes for action in these sketches—"... associations of thought allowed her no peace: piling up ceaselessly... they forced her... to cut short a subject of conversation she had scarcely begun and launch forth into a second one



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before she had even skimmed, still less explored, the first. [She] went chasing after them as long as she could with her talkative tongue . . . which was exceedingly fluent."

Moravia's guile has become transparent. The former burning brand with which he marked hypocrisy with disfavor now becomes whim in his characters, passion has turned into fancy, cruelty has become careless chatter and pique, the exploration of human motivations is no more than a taut synoptical elipsis. The characters in these works do not move as his characters once did. They have no independent life, simply decorative value.

Moravia was never the deepest kind of writer, but he could be tremendously effective and immediate, when he wrote about the sorrowful tragedy and miscalculation that tore his world apart and shocked and dismayed. His clarity and force put that world into sometimes startling relief. It was a world he clearly felt deeply about. As for the philosophic equations that have taken its place as subject, Moravia lacks the intellectual scope and the creative temperament to cope adequately with them. It looks as if it's all done with mirrors.

A Man to Conjure With

JONATHAN BAUMBACH

Random House, \$4.95

GEORGE GREENE

Recently it is as if a number of American novelists — Bellow and Malamud among them — had pledged to show how far they have traveled beyond the fatal innocence of Fitzgerald's Gatsby. And now Peter Becker, harassed, lustful, sidesteps jobs as desperately as a tomcat resisting death by drowning. Understandably, he abandons writing economic research to become a New York cabbie, but most of his hours are still passed in "the anesthetic comfort of depression. . . ." Ultimately he finds himself, less exultant than frantic, struck down by an auto in that inescapable street, where heroes learn they can run

no farther, which was mapped with most hallucinatory skill by Dostoevsky, patron saint of this school. Peter allows his neurotic wife to undergo an abortion, muttering that he really wants her to have the child. Fourteen years later he returns from the West, where he has played the characteristically ludicrous role of a forest ranger who spends most of his days chasing his runaway horse.

Mr. Baumbach possesses an authentic and sophisticated talent. He can be wonderfully precise, as when he describes Peter washing his hands "with the kind of concentration that jewelers affect when they anatomize a watch." At other moments the inertia of the scene infects the diction. ("Under her microscope, he smiled amoebically.") Whenever his people laugh it comes out like a moan. They make insane demands on one another, or else they sulk. "I love you," Peter warns his wife, "only when you love me. . . ." Other inhabitants of this midnight, claustrophobic city repeat the love-hate pattern of Peter's frustrations. ". . . he had a knack for stepping over the weeds and trampling the roses." It is not accidental that all Peter's memories are of flight. He gets out of the habit of staying awake, and fact and dream mix with mounting frequency. During waking hours simultaneously he desires his wife, the mistress of his shady brother, and a young girl whom he drives home daily from school.

Peter's invitation to a son born out of wedlock to live with him symbolizes recognition of his need for some commitment transcending the self. Peter insists that he wants to understand his life, yet it is not just his face which conveys "the sour look of failure." He projects more than the comic rowdiness of a man able to survive only because he spits in the eye of the universe. Watching him smash furniture in a rooming house, one suspects a deeper malaise: ". . . he knew even more enemies than he had." In one of his compensatory dreams his interlocutor says, "Everything should be uncompleted, because that's life — man, I mean you're dead when you're done." Survival, thus, depends less on the resolution of

doubts than on maintaining psychological mobility.

Notwithstanding a number of brilliantly rendered scenes, the most vexing problem in judging Peter Becker is how one may sift an urge to confessional therapy from mere ranting. It does no service to view him as one of those sidewalk metaphysicians, freewheeling, profane, who have enough guts or insight to insist that the sun itself derives from human urine. "If you don't love yourself, Cantor's silence had taught him, you are incapable of loving anyone." It comes as no surprise to learn that Dr. Cantor is a psychiatrist. What draws Mr. Baumbach, and a number of others, to Dostoevsky is not so much his heroes' efforts to achieve self-transcendence as the great Russian's prophetic drawing of states of mental imbalance.

It is only fair to add that Peter's fears are not just self-induced. The smell of Doomsday devices hovers over the Manhattan of this novel like a more insidious form of smog. Yet the question still remains as to whether private solutions which are restrictive to the point of being hermetic really stand up better than trying to confront — if not outface — a world which is admittedly corrupt. There are as many treacherous bypaths in the Wild West of the private psyche as in forlorn Automats. At the end Peter seems closer to exhaustion than to perception. He remembers one remark made by his wandering musician father, who admitted that only rarely could he get a superior sound from his trumpet. Peter cannot accept compromise as part of the toll required before covering those "thousands of miles of desolation from ear to ear." At Brooklyn College he had five majors in four years, the last being — what else? — philosophy.

What is most affecting is not Peter's antics as the latest embodiment of the big city picaresque, but rather his loneliness, masked yet fearful. "In the will of the imagination, the dream of love survives its loss." Peter insists that his son and he should visit all the places on the boy's list so that they will be free of obligations and the boy's grandparents, who brought him up, will have no grounds for complaint. In reply the

child cites one topic which apparently none of Peter's instructors ever reached. "Is that good," he asks, "to be free of obligations?"

Michael Joe

WILLIAM COTTER MURRAY

Appleton-Century, \$5.95

The Brightening Day

MICHAEL McLAVERY

Macmillan, \$4.95

AUGUSTINE MARTIN

There is very little genuine realism in the Irish literary tradition. In a society so monolithic and passionate in its religion, so sensitive of its national image, so conformist in its social ethos, it has been hard for the artist to take up that detached, contemplative stance so essential for the strict realist. In his book on modern Irish fiction Benedict Kiely has written of the Irish novel be-

ing "tugged this way and that, now by the rejection that meant so much to Joyce, now by the acceptance that contains as a skin contains an apple in the stories of Daniel Corkery." The still point between enthusiasm and disillusion has not often been achieved—Peadar O'Donnell in the twenties, Francis MacManus in the thirties, Mary Lavin and Kiely, himself, in the forties and a small number of younger fictionists like James Plunkett, John Montague and John McGahern. But the bulk of our post-Revolutionary tradition has shown little patience with the "grocers' republic" that has grown from the terrible beauty of 1916. All of which underlines Mr. Murray's achievement in *Michael Joe*—a novel of the most distinguished realism which goes one better by choosing a grocer as its central character.

The fact that the novel deals with an Ireland of twenty years ago, an Ireland which is being rapidly transfigured under the Second Economic Programme, is beside the point. What

counts is that Mr. Murray has recollected from exile a small town in County Clare, re-created it with the most vivid accuracy and populated it with authentic life. It is no bitter act of revenge, like Brindsley McNamara's *Valley of the Squinting Windows* of fifty years ago. And while the story embodies telling evidence of jansenism, spiritual stagnation, superstition and clerical autocracy it does not attack these abuses as O'Connor or O'Faolain might have done in the thirties. Mr. Murray's small-town society has its vices, but these are not blamed for the hero's failure. He is his own man, and his failure, though not untypical of his kind, is peculiarly his own.

On the surface Michael Joe seems a good scout: he keeps shop dutifully for his widowed mother, plays with crude courage for the local football team, is cheerful in his cups, generous with his money, no more lecherous than the next man in his clumsy overtures to the local girls. It is only when he has to stand the test of love that his defi-

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ciencies become apparent. The girl in the case is the beautiful Nell Cullen, recently returned from England, and Michael Joe is irrevocably in love with her before he discovers that she has had an illegitimate child in England. He rejects her brutally. The hurt to his pride unleashes a dormant viciousness in him. His pampered, only-childhood has made him incapable of self-criticism, so he finds himself reeling from one primitive response to the next. Nell marries his best friend, a dreary but valiant little bank-clerk, and Michael Joe is tortured by a jealousy that he fails to recognize, let alone control. He oscillates violently from vindictiveness to generosity, takes refuge in violence, then in drink. Finally on a fierce, ambiguous impulse he marries a pious, insignificant girl whom he does not love.

With a strong, clean narrative the author carries his painful saga into the next generation. Michael Joe is shown drawing apart from the timid, frigid girl he has married, sublimating into action his unrevealed obsession. His wife takes refuge in sick sanctimony and sets out to condition her only son for celibacy, and a predestined vocation to the priesthood. It is a grey desperate history, punctuated only by fairs, football matches and booze-ups. But out of its drab texture Mr. Murray has fashioned a book which entitles him to a rank with the best of Ireland's living novelists.

Michael McLaverty has already established himself as a leading exponent of the Irish short story. With his gentle percipience he has always tended towards "acceptance" in the better sense, and his fiction has not suffered from the stance. But his latest novel, *The Brightening Day*, exhibits a positive timidity in the face of reality. His prim, inoffensive young hero, Andrew Wade, is a far cry from the sour authenticity of Michael Joe McCarthy. The story opens with Wade living alone in a rented cottage in a strange part of Ireland. Soon it is revealed that he had had to leave his home town because he had been unjustly accused of adultery, to his family's disgrace. In his new setting he becomes tutor to the son of

a local rich family, falls in love with the daughter, is befriended by the parish priest and having overcome a series of trivial difficulties is given charge of the local school. The character of the hero is so free from evil—even from temptation—that the novel inclines as much towards hagiography as fiction. It is hard to visualize the township that figured young Wade for an adulterer. Were it not, in fact, for the delicate evocation of landscape and the lyrical perfection of the prose, it would be hard to visualize Michael McLaverty as his pious begetter.

After Twenty Years

RICHARD J. BARNET &
MARCUS G. RASKIN

Random House, \$5.95

The Troubled Partnership

HENRY A. KISSINGER

McGraw-Hill, \$5.95

RONALD STEEL

The failing fortunes of the Atlantic alliance have inspired a mounting pile of health cures from the optimists and obituaries from the pessimists. Nearly everyone agrees that the patient is in bad shape. The only problem is what to do about it. Some, like Professor Kissinger, would inject him full of vitamins, give him a new job, and hope that he will bounce back to health. Others, like Messrs. Barnett and Raskin, would pat NATO on the back for having accomplished his job, give him a gold watch, and send him into the earliest possible retirement. The difference between these two diagnoses perfectly expresses the conflict over politics and strategy now wracking the alliance. As guides to NATO and its woes, these complementary—and often contradictory—books are valuable and stimulating. Indeed, they go a good deal beyond NATO to an analysis of the new relation between America and a changing Europe.

A distinguished authority on Atlantic affairs and professor at Harvard, Kissinger does not consider the alli-

ance's wounds as mortal, and sees a good deal of its troubles as rooted in tactical errors and misunderstandings. Among such errors have been the ill-fated Nassau conference of December 1962 and the polyglot navy of the MLF, both of which he deplores as short-sighted and politically naive. Among the misunderstandings, none looms larger than the relations between Gaullist France and the United States—a continuing study in mutual incomprehension which Kissinger analyzes with rare insight. Showing how de Gaulle has often been unjustly slighted by his American critics, he argues that American and French policy differ more on tactics than on ends—although one wonders whether the ends really are so similar as the General's admirers would like to believe.

With a welcome objectivity, Kissinger shows how the U.S., however unintentionally, has been paternalistic and overbearing toward its allies, singing the praises of "partnership," but interpreting this as European approval for whatever policies Washington should choose to follow. In the field of weapons strategy, which he not only comprehends in its intricacies, but can communicate with clarity, he states that Pentagon theories have been "designed to make our hegemony more bearable, not to alter it," and explains why the Europeans reject McNamara's computerized options for themselves, even while admitting that they may be suitable for the U.S. alone. Unmerciful where he sees a gimmick take the place of a coherent policy, he blasts the MLF as "compounding every problem it was supposed to solve" by upsetting the nuclear balance in Europe and inspiring the Germans to dangerous ambitions. To unknot the nuclear impasse, he would junk the MLF, give the Germans a voice in NATO policy planning, and set up a European nuclear force with contributions from the three NATO nuclear powers: the U.S., Britain and France.

Washington, he argues with impeccable logic, cannot keep European hands off the nuclear trigger and expect NATO to survive. To preserve the

alliance, he urges the U.S. to accept a European nuclear responsibility and give NATO a political framework as a *raison d'être* for the 1970s. Kissinger tries to come to terms with the thorny question of Germany—whose disputed partition brought NATO into being—by suggesting reunification through ultimate confederation with a freely-elected, and presumably anti-Soviet, East German state. However, he frankly admits this is highly improbable and therefore counsels the West to repair its fences until that distant day when the Iron Curtain comes tumbling down of its own accord.

Where Kissinger prescribes liniment and a little therapy, Barnet and Raskin suggest dynamite. Not only are they uninterested in strengthening NATO; they welcome its demise as liberating us from cold war myths and opening the door to a European settlement with Russia. With formidable documentation and cold analysis, these two young analysts, who are co-directors of the Institute for Policy Studies in Washington, blast the whole concept of an integrated military alliance between America and Western Europe as obsolete, unnecessary and troublesome. Instead of Kissinger's partnership, they see an entanglement whose "major pre-occupation, beyond questions of military strategy and doctrine, has been its own future," and maintain that NATO has become inimical to America's own interests. Rejecting the military integration that came in the wake of the Korean war, they would scuttle NATO in its present form and return to the original concept of the alliance: a U.S. guaranty pact to Europe—a design not unlike that proposed by General de Gaulle. Liberated from the conflicting demands of its allies, the U.S. could then bargain with the Russians for an end to the Cold War in Europe, and turn its energies to more serious problems in Asia, Latin America and even right here at home.

Since any European settlement revolves around the question of Germany, they, too, have their German solution. It involves a recognition of the East German regime, an eventual

confederation of the two Germanys, and the removal of both foreign troops and nuclear weapons from German soil. Drawing on the basic outline of disengagement, they would satisfy Germany's quest for unity by removing her as a source of contention between the two nuclear powers, and limiting her military capacity. Since disengagement would eliminate both the need and the feasibility of the cold war alliances, Russia and America would pull back their armies, and a confederated Europe would take its place as a Third, or perhaps Fourth, Force in world affairs. Welcoming what they consider to be the inevitable, Barnet and Raskin see the disintegration of NATO as the release of an albatross from around America's neck. In their eyes, we have devoted an unseemly amount of emotional energy in running Europe's affairs, and our continuing commitment to the dream of Atlantica—whether through the rhetoric of the "Atlantic community" or the nuclear missiles of the MLF—"will either thwart a Great Power *détente* or the *détente* will overtake the policy."

That Europe should eventually become a Great Power, they do not deny. That such a Great Power should have a voice in its own fate, they recognize—although they would have Washington and Moscow strike a deal over Europe's head while they still have the power to speak for their allies. This is frank *Realpolitik* and one must admire Barnet and Raskin for the honesty of their convictions. They do not make the fuzzy assumption that America and a united Europe will be joined together in eternal brotherhood, and indeed question whether it is to our interests to be pushing European federation. In this they are joined by Kissinger who points out that "it is doubtful that either our national or Atlantic interests require our passionate commitment to a supranational structure for Europe." A good deal of cant and self-indulgent optimism has gone into our Common Market crusading, and it is time that qualified critics should at last be casting a cold eye toward the continent. Which is not to say that we should be hostile to

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European unification, but only that we should stop kidding ourselves about what it might mean.

What it does mean is an eventual detachment of America from European affairs and if not the disappearance of NATO, then a radical refurbishing that will downgrade an unnecessary and increasingly troublesome military integration into something approaching an old-style military guarantee with political overtones. Believing that the future of the West lies in the preservation of the

alliance, Kissinger realizes this is only possible if Europe becomes a true "equal partner" to America in power as well as in rhetoric. Barnet and Raskin accept the creation of a powerful Europe, but consider that this would render NATO unnecessary and thus would barter the alliance for a deal with Russia. In the elimination of NATO and the Warsaw pact, they see an alternative to the cold war in Europe. Theirs is a provocative thesis, bristling with insight and fresh ideas, and crammed

with the minor heresies which a hide-bound Washington needs so desperately.

Knights and Dragons

ELIZABETH SPENCER

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Another provocative novella about an American lady in distress in Italy succeeds Miss Spencer's *The Light in the Piazza*. The scene is Rome, Venice and Genoa, and the heroine's predicament is again a delicate psychological one. Tormented by the memory and influence of an unhappy marriage, Martha Ingram is pursued by the destructive specter of her ex-husband. A famed philosopher, who appeared to be a saint to friends, he was, or seemed, a tyrant to her. She has tried to find a new life as a consular secretary in Rome and in her job manages to function well. But privately she is haunted and withdrawn.

When she meets an American economist and embarks on an affair, it is charged from the outset with fear and failure. For in telling her that he's learned her ex-husband has suffered an accident — a statement he throws out to reach her and make her react — "he cast(s) her, with one casual blow, straight into madness." Guilt and grief



REVIEWERS

ALICE MAYHEW is a frequent contributor to these pages.

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ROSEMARY E. JONES is an assistant editor at a New York publishing house.

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flood in and she responds distractedly, confused, suspended, separated from reality, uncertain what is fact or imagination. She is once more, it seems, the weak victim of a cruel male who plays with the delicate balance of her sanity — undone by the knights and dragons inflicted on her by fate, or choice, or her imaginings.

Miss Spencer has painted an enigmatic picture of an exile's paranoia — a tortured psyche that cannot contain hatred or guilt. "You had to stand what you couldn't stand," her superior observes, "or else you couldn't live at all." Her heroine is reduced to moving emptily through a landscape of light and shadow, excessively responsive to sun and cold, color and smell, evoked effectively as the author weaves a climatic counterpoint of inner and outer sensation. In the end, her lover gone, she becomes "no more than that meeting point of shadow and sun. . .", ". . . a friend now to any landscape, a companion to cloud and sky."

At times one must reread Miss Spencer's distilled prose, almost Jamesian in its ambiguity, to grasp its meaning. Frequent pronoun references are unclear, to the point of exasperation, and she is not beyond using a parenthesis within a parenthesis. But in this short book she managed to render an exact miniature portrait of expatriates who "never lose

their experience abroad, they simply magnify it." With insight and sadness, she shows the clash of temperament, attitude and purpose, and describes the dissolution of the weak, who find themselves ultimately homeless and adrift.

The static quality of her heroine's responses may cause some impatience. But it is doubtless necessary to her intent, as is the oblique manner of her expression and humorless examination of nuances of feeling. Certainly Miss Spencer has shown herself again to be a subtle and graceful craftsman, whose carefully wrought prose should please, even if her meanings prove puzzling occasionally. Mysterious in its overtones, *Knights and Dragons* is a fine female mixture of poetry, psychology and even allegory — a modern day telling of an unchivalrous knight (St. George?) who, attempting to slay the demons of his lady's past, instead destroys her.

CORRESPONDENCE



(Continued from page 77)

income tax cuts. However, a \$4-5 billion reduction in excise taxes will not have the demand-inducing stimulus of a \$4-5 billion income tax cut. First, the largest gain will accrue to purchasers of luxury goods and services, persons who traditionally save a larger proportion of their incremental income. Second, a number of firms will probably not pass on the entire cut to the consumer; this may be particularly true of automobile dealers.

The cut is regressive since many of the goods and services being considered for reduction are infrequently purchased by households with incomes less than \$5000.

A more effective tax reduction package would have included a \$3 billion reduction in withholding taxes for those earning less than \$5000, a \$3 billion cut in excise taxes spread over three years (carefully policed to prevent excessive price increases), and a real effort to close some of the more flagrant tax loopholes.

DECKLUND SPINELLI

Photo by Walther, Munster



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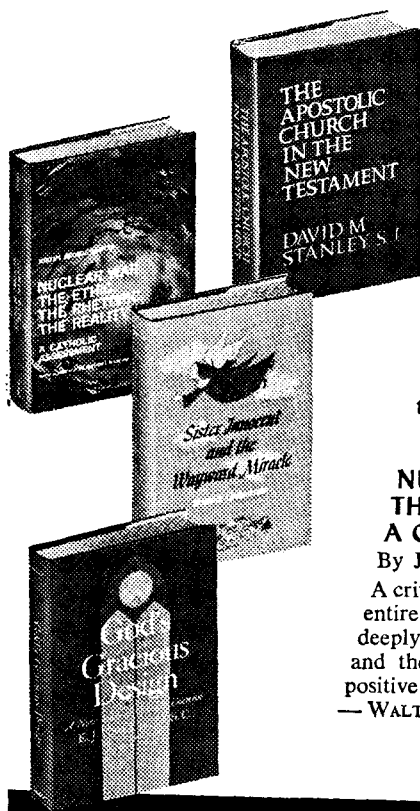


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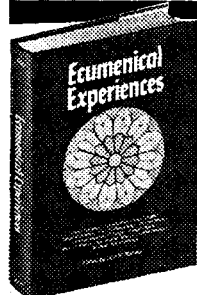
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